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HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

IN

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



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Highways and Byways
IN
Buckinghamshire

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CLEMENT SHORTER

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

FREDERICK L. GRIGGS

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1910

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RICHARD CLAY AND SONS, LIMITED,
BREAD STREET HILL, E.C. AND
BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

TO THE IMMORTAL MEMORY
OF
JOHN HAMPDEN
MARTYR OF LIBERTY
THIS BRIEF HISTORY OF THE COUNTY
HE ADORNED
IS REVERENTLY DEDICATED

PREFACE

To write an account of Buckinghamshire is to follow in the footsteps of many capable historians, and one concludes the undertaking with the feeling that numberless volumes would not exhaust the story of what Lord Beaconsfield called "this great historical county." There are a hundred aspects of the subject that might legitimately be dwelt upon by anyone who undertook to write a volume of this kind. Indeed, in a criticism that we have read of one of the books in the series we find the critic complaining that nothing was said about fishing. "Perhaps," says the writer, "the author does not care about fishing, but he who writes about a county is bound to care for everything." I am but following the tradition of a successful series of books in declining to accept this view. There are varied things that attract to a county. Fishing, shooting, hunting, for example, are three of many. I am interested in none of these. Buckinghamshire attracts me solely on the human side. It has been the home of an exceptional number of illustrious men, it has been the cradle of English liberty, and in a measure, also, the nursery of American statesmanship. The student of literature, of politics, of science, and of theology will find in our county many interesting associations. My book will appeal only to those who require this personal element to be brought under

their notice. I hope particularly to attract the visitors from English-speaking lands overseas. Many earlier writers have made my task an easy one. No student of the history of Buckinghamshire will have failed to make the acquaintance of some of the books that are here given in order of their publication; but I have endeavoured, by the help of written inquiry and personal investigation on the spot, to discover where, as has so frequently happened, time has modified the statement of the printed page:—

- Parochial Antiquities . . . of Oxford and Bucks.* By White Kennett. Oxford. 1695.
- The History and Antiquities of the Town, Hamlet and Deanery of Buckingham.* By Browne Willis. 1755.
- Stowe: A Description of the Magnificent House and Gardens of Richard Grenville Temple, Earl Temple.* By B. Seeley. 1769.
- Buckinghamshire.* By Daniel Lysons. 1806.
- Stowe: A Description of the House and Gardens of his Grace the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos.* 1838.
- The History of Newport Pagnell and Its Immediate Vicinity.* By Joseph Staines. 1842.
- The History and Antiquities of the County of Buckingham.* By George Lipscomb. 4 vols. 1847.
- The Stowe Catalogue.* Priced and Annotated by Henry Ramsey Forster. 1848.
- Ædes Hartwillianæ or Notices of the Manor and Mansion of Hartwell.* By Captain W. H. Smyth. 1851.
- Some Account of the Hamlet of East Burnham, 'Co. Bucks.* By A Late Resident. 1858.
- Addenda to the Ædes Hartwillianæ.* By Admiral W. H. Smyth. 1864.
- History of the Parish of Wraysbury, Ankerwycke Priory and Magna Charta Island, with the History of Horton and the Town of Colnbrook, Bucks.* By Gordon W. J. Gyll. 1862.
- History and Topography of Buckinghamshire.* By James Joseph Sheahan. 1862.
- The Early History and Antiquities of Wycombe.* By John Parker. 1878.
- Buckinghamshire: A Record of Local Occurrences.* By Robert Gibbs. 4 vols. 1878-82.
- A History of Aylesbury.* By Robert Gibbs. 1885.

- Worthies of Buckinghamshire.* By Robert Gibbs. 1888.
The Buckinghamshire Miscellany. By Robert Gibbs. 1891.
The Gentleman's Magazine Library: English Topography, Buckinghamshire. Edited by George Laurence Gomme. 1891.
Echoes of Old County Life. By J. K. Fowler of Aylesbury. 1892.
Memoirs of the Verney Family During the Civil War. By Frances Parthenope Verney. 2 vols. 1892.
Olney Past and Present. By Oliver Ratcliff and Herbert Brown. 1893.
Recollections of Old County Life. By J. K. Fowler. 1894.
The Church Bells of Buckinghamshire. By Alfred Heneage Cocks. 1897.
Extracts from the Letters and Journals of William Cory, Author of "Ionica." Collected and Arranged by Francis Warre Cornish. 1897.
Memoirs of the Verney Family During the Civil War. By Margaret M. Verney. 2 vols. 1899.
A History of Eton College. By Sir H. C. Maxwell Lyte. 1899.
Memoirs of Old Buckinghamshire. Edited by P. H. Ditchfield. 1901.
Milton's England. By Lucia Ames Mead. 1902.
The History of Denham, Bucks. By the Rev. R. H. Lathbury. 1904.
The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton. By Logan Pearsall Smith. 2 vols. 1907.
Penn's County and Other Buckinghamshire Sketches. By E. S. Roscoe. 1907.
The Victoria History of the County of Buckingham. Edited by William Page. Vol. I., 1905; Vol. II. 1908.
The Edwardian Inventories for Buckinghamshire. Edited by F. C. Eeles for the Alcuin Club. 1908.

I have also to acknowledge the value, in my many journeys through the county, of three serviceable guide-books which this volume rather hopes to supplement than to supersede—Murray's *Handbook*, Black's *Guide*, by G. E. Mitton, and Methuen's *Little Guide*, by E. S. Roscoe. I have to thank the Earl of Buckinghamshire, Sir Edmund and Lady Verney, and many other owners of Manor Houses and Art Treasures, for their courtesy in permitting me to see these. I am grateful to Mr. Lasenby Liberty and numerous other

Buckinghamshire friends, for useful suggestions; to a writer in the *Bucks Herald* who writes under the pseudonym of "Sigma," for valuable hints; and to the ever-interesting *Records of Buckinghamshire*, that is to say, to the Transactions of the Buckinghamshire Archæological Society, of which I have the privilege of being a member. No one, moreover, will attempt a county history in these days without the assistance of *Notes and Queries* and the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Lastly, I have to thank Mr. Edward Stanley Roscoe—ever interested in the county concerning which he has written so ably—for kindly reading my proof sheets.

CLEMENT SHORTER.

January 19th, 1910.

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HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

IN

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE is the thirty-third in size of the forty counties of England. It doubtless gained its name from its county-town of Buckingham, but the derivation of that name has been much disputed, and the problem may be considered impossible of solution. A favourite derivation is to suggest that the name is derived from the Saxon word *Bucceen* or *Bocceen*, meaning beech-trees, because that tree flourishes so largely in 'Buckinghamshire.' But while the beech abounds in the Chiltern Hills, it is not specially in evidence in the neighbourhood of Buckingham. Then there is the etymology that derives the name from *Buccen*, a buck or deer, as the county must in early days have been well-stocked with deer. A third suggestion is that as Charter-lands were called by the Saxons *boch-land*, as distinguished from *folk-land*, this may account for the name. The many villages in England called "Buckland" were once called "Boch-land," meaning charter-land. The fourth, and now generally accepted, theory

derives the name from a family of Saxon chieftains, called Buck or Bock. Certainly a tribe called the Bucinobantes, or Bucci, dwelt on the Rhine. The county abounds in suggestions of an earlier world. Roman remains have been discovered again and again. Tessellated pavements and coins, roadways and earthworks, all testify to the presence of the Cæsars and their soldiers. Many illustrations of these relics are to be found in the Victoria County History. Near Ellesborough we come upon Cymbeline's Mount, recalling Shakspeare's play, and also a tradition of a great victory by Cunobelinus, King of south-east Britain, who flourished in the first forty years of the Christian era. But the discovery of Neolithic instruments in one of the square inclosures has inclined archæologists to belief in a much earlier origin. Grimes Dyke, that remarkable earthwork, perhaps built to keep off invading tribes, but still puzzling to the learned, runs across the southern part of the county. In some places it is forty feet wide and thirty feet deep, and this trench, in its way as marvellous as the Pyramids when we consider its indisputably human origin, passes almost unnoticed by the visitor or the resident in the Chilterns. More fascinating to most of us to-day than the relics of British, Roman, and Saxon occupation that abound, are the fine hills—the Chilterns—where one can still walk in solitude amid ample beech-woods, right-of-way paths happily still obtaining. There is no time of the year that they are not lovely. The young leaves of spring suggest fairyland, but so does the snow of winter upon the bare branches. In summer and in autumn their beauties are better known. To the politician the Chilterns offers a quite different suggestion. To accept the Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds has been the lot of many a Parliamentary. Most of my readers understand the phrase. The Hundreds are those of Stoke, Desborough, and Burnham. The Stewardship recalls the time when it was no sinecure, when the holder of this office under the Crown was

required to free the district from the attacks of the robbers who infested the woods. How well the stewards of those days did their work is indicated by the fact that we have still a Gallows Hill near Eilesborough, and Hang Hill is the name of another suggestive spot. To accept an office under the Crown is, as our Parliament is at present constituted, to vacate one's seat, and thus the now very nominal Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds came to serve a useful if formal purpose, instead of a useful and tragic one.

One of the earliest battles recorded in Buckinghamshire history is that between the sons of Cymbeline and the Roman general Aulus Plautius, but that probably took place near Buckingham and not at the spot known as Cymbeline's Mount or Kimble Castle, to which we have already referred. There were fights here between the Saxons and the Danes, but through the Wars of the Roses, and even until we come to the Civil War of the seventeenth century, Buckinghamshire has had but little history other than in the paths of peace. It built abbeys, churches, castles, and even palaces. Its kings have resided here. The Palace at Brill was built by Edward the Confessor, and Henry the Second kept court there with his Chancellor, Thomas à-Becket, in attendance. John kept Christmas here in 1205, but the county had not very happy associations for him. Ten years later he signed the Great Charter on its soil. Edward the Black Prince probably had a palace at Princes Risborough. As for castles, they were many, although as with the palaces scarcely a stone remains to interest us from those ancient days. The castles of Buckingham, of Newport Pagnell, of Long Crendon, of Bolbec, and of Lavendon have all disappeared. Of monastic institutions, however, there are many interesting relics, and we may visit the fragments at Burnham with particular pleasure. But of noteworthy churches with tombs of dead and gone crusaders, and of old manor-houses with suggestions of bygone tyranny in the way of

priests' holes, while rich in portraits by famous artists, Buckinghamshire has no lack.

But what distinguishes this county above all others is its associations with famous men and famous deeds. On an island in the Thames, now part of the Buckinghamshire mainland, John, King of England, signed in 1215 the Charter that laid the foundation of English liberty. In the church of Great Hampden lie the remains of the great patriot who, a few years earlier, had struck in Great Kimble Church, also in this county, the first blow for liberties that were never again to be in vital danger. In the church of Chenies are the remains of that Russell who died on the scaffold, the victim of the tyranny of a later Stuart. In every corner of Buckinghamshire there is something to recall that it was, in critical days, the home of freedom-loving enthusiasts; and no American reader will forget that Jordans contains the grave of William Penn, as Chalfont St. Giles contains his, at one time, home. In poetry the county boasts of Milton and Waller, Cowper, Shelley, and Gray, as names dearly associated with it; in statesmanship, those of Burke and Disraeli, Grenville and Portland. Theology has many curious bonds with the county from the martyrs who lost their lives at Amersham, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, and his daughter Mary, to the Biblical commentator, Thomas Scott, who is buried at Aston Sandford, while still greater glory attaches to the associations with John Wyclif and the "Judicious" Hooker of the *Ecclesiastical Polity*. As we pass through the county from village to village we shall meet with many other names that will endear Buckinghamshire to us as a part of England once to have known is ever to remember with affectionate interest.

CHAPTER II

AYLESBURY

As the county of Buckinghamshire is only fifty-three miles at its greatest length, and twenty-seven miles at its greatest breadth, the visitor who approaches it in a motor car can see it quite easily from any given point in day excursions. He who uses a horse or bicycle or his own legs can become familiar with it from any one of five towns: Aylesbury, High Wycombe, Great Marlow, Buckingham and Olney. The county contains no very substantial commercial centres, and it is one of its charms that no industries have grown up to spoil the rusticity of well nigh all of it. Apart from the railway works at Wolverton and Slough it is essentially an agricultural county, and it was exclusively this until the eighteenth century, when the so-called cottage industries of lace-making, straw-plaiting, and chair-manufacturing grew up. The two former have declined, while the last has grown far beyond the resources of tree wood obtainable in the district. The social aspect of agriculture may be summed up in the fact that the wages of the labourers were never more than one shilling a day in the eighteenth century, while they are three or four times that amount to-day. Wages then ran considerably higher in the Chilterns than in the Vale. The three largest towns in Buckinghamshire are High Wycombe, Slough, and Aylesbury, the first with a population—in 1901—of nineteen thousand souls, Slough and Aylesbury with less than ten thousand.

Let our first introduction to the county be from Aylesbury, now reached pleasantly from Marylebone by the Great Central Railway in less than an hour. We find ourselves in a town with some small survival of its ancient picturesqueness, although all too little of its many historical associations is preserved for us to-day. Standing in the centre of the large market square we face the "George" Inn, while our back is to the Corn Exchange. A hundred years ago we should have faced the "King's Head" Inn, now buried in a side street, but worth a visit to see its old Tudor window, one of the few relics of an older Aylesbury. We first visit the "George" Inn, however, which has pleasant associations with Lord Beaconsfield; and they show you the chair in which he was wont to sit. Here, as leader of the Opposition in 1874, he found the Government of the day at fault over a treaty securing Great Britain the freedom of the Malacca Straits for our trade with China; and addressed the men of Buckinghamshire from one of the windows of the "George." His rival Gladstone replied with a rhyme much enjoyed at the time. It has been variously rendered and has been attributed to Horace Lloyd:—

The farmers of Aylesbury gathered to dine,
And they ate their prime beef, and they drank their old wine,
With the wine there was beer, with the beer there was bacca,
The liquors went round and the banquet was crowned
With some thundering news from the Straits of Malacca!

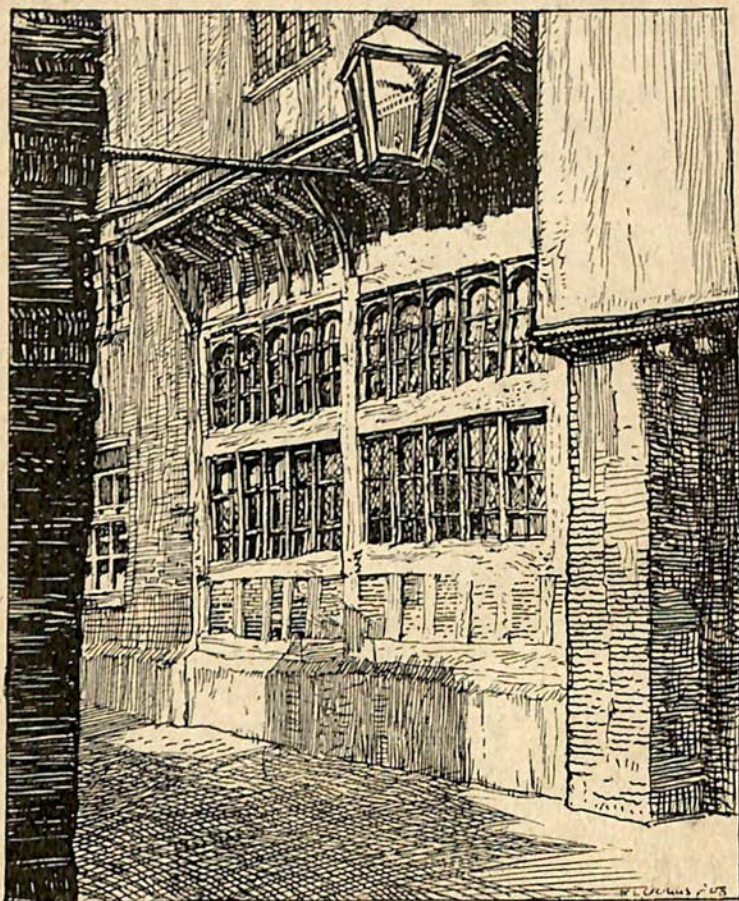
The "George" Hotel, which now so entirely overshadows the "King's Head," was built in the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is interesting on account of its ball-room with a music gallery and many pictures, although these last are not of great merit. It is supposed that they were removed from Eythorpe House upon the demolition of that splendid residence by the Earl of Chesterfield in 1812. Most of the pictures are copies, and we may be sure that none of them are of value, or they would not have remained so long in this

quiet corner of the country. They were probably handed over to a salesman and knocked down for a trifle to the then landlord of the "George" at the time that Lord Chesterfield destroyed his house in a "pet" at not being appointed Lord Lieutenant of the county. His rare treasures he removed elsewhere. There are a set of four-hand fire screens in the possession of the landlord which show the positions of the pictures in the room. These pictures go with the house, and pass with the freehold from tenant to tenant.¹ The "George" was originally known as "The Paved Hall." Its traditions, however, really begin with Lord Beaconsfield, for the earlier political history of the town is associated rather with the "King's Head" and the "White Hart."

The "King's Head" is situated at the back of the "George." Here we are in quite an old-world atmosphere—the sign, indeed, only commemorates Henry the Eighth—but the hall of this quaint inn, and its long window, visible from the street, have a much greater antiquity. The heraldic devices that are still to be seen on the window make it clear that it dates from the fifteenth century; and also make it clear that the house had something to do with religion. As a matter of fact, all the original inns of England were kept by religious communities, and were under the control of the monasteries. The "King's Head" has little to show you to-day beyond its fine window, extending across its principal room, now used as a "bar," with heraldry that recalls Margaret, the wife of Henry the Sixth from which it has been inferred that the building was erected

¹ Perhaps their greatest interest is in the fact that not one of the historians of Buckinghamshire gives their pedigree with any certainty. They include copies of Rubens's *Garden of Love* and *The Assumption*, as also of Raphael's *Madonna della Sedia*. It is claimed that one of them is an original Reynolds. The celebrities on the walls— all by unknown artists—include Caroline, wife of George the Second; Charles the Second; Mary the Second; Charles the First and his Queen, Henrietta; William the Third; George the Third; the Duke of Marlborough; Christina, Queen of Sweden, and Frederick, Prince of Wales.

shortly after the marriage of that monarch. In the seventeenth century the "King's Head" issued its own coinage, or tokens,



The King's Head, Aylesbury.

for small payments. This it did in common with mercers and other tradesmen of the town. Instead of doing the work for itself, the Government allowed them here, as elsewhere, to

make their own 'necessarie chainge.' One token, dated 1567, bears on one side of it the legend: *At ye King's Head In.*

The most interesting of all the Inns of Aylesbury, however, has disappeared. In its final form the "White Hart" stood until 1864, when it was destroyed to make way for the Corn Exchange and Market Hall which you see when you are standing with your back to the "George" Hotel. The original "White Hart" was a three-gabled building, dating back, like the "King's Head," to the times of the religious orders. Some substantial buildings seem to have been added to it by John Wilmot Earl of Rochester, in the reign of Charles the Second and the inn is alluded to by inference in Clarendon's *History of the Great Rebellion*, where he tells how the Earl of Rochester lodged in Aylesbury when he arrived there in 1655, and attempted to raise a force for the Prince—afterwards Charles the Second. Four years before this Cromwell himself had passed through the town on his return from his victory at Worcester. The historian of Aylesbury quotes a lengthy poem concerning this inn, being the romance of Grace Gilvey, who was the landlord's daughter in Cromwell's time: She was beloved by two suitors—one a cavalier; the other a puritan. At the Restoration she married her royalist lover. Here is a description of the inn soon after the battle of Worcester:—

A band of soldiers, with their merry din,
Filled the rude kitchen of the White Hart Inn.
Some round the spacious chimney, smoking, sat,
And whiled the time in battle-talk and chat;
Some at the snow-white table gamed and swore,
While pikes and matchlocks strewed the sanded floor.
Gilvey, the landlord, 'mid the group was seen,
With full red face, bright eye, and honest mien;
He smoked in silence in his old arm chair,
Nor joke nor jest disturbed his saddened air.

Rochester with his companion Armourer having escaped^o across England were arrested by a justice of the peace and

well-known sequestrator of royalists' estates named Henn. Henn told the landlord that he would hold him responsible for the horses not being taken from the stables. According to Clarendon, the innkeeper was bribed with "thirty or forty Jacobus's and a fair gold chain." In any case he gave Rochester and his companion other horses and they escaped.

We know that Clarendon refers to the "White Hart" as the refuge of Rochester in Aylesbury, because he gives us the name of the landlord who thus helped the fugitive to escape as Gilvy or Gilrey. At the Restoration it is supposed that in gratitude the Earl built for the landlord the once famous Rochester Room, but it must have been his son, the poet-earl, as the first Earl of Rochester died in 1658. The room survived the rebuilding of much of the inn in 1813, and is admirably described by John Kersley Fowler, whose two books of gossip about the county make such capital reading. Fowler tells us that the long room was panelled and had painted figures in its niches, and that the ceiling was by Verrio. There were other rooms with particular names, one called the Crown because the taxes and customs were collected here, another the Mitre because here the Church dues were annually paid, and another 'Change because the business of the town was done in it. The Rochester Room is of interest as being twice the scene of horsey exploits. It was about 1835 that the Marquis of Waterford brought his horse upstairs to this room, and it was not got down again until it had smashed some windows and damaged the staircase. More memorable was an exploit of 1851 on the occasion of a dinner in the Rochester Room when the Marquis of Waterford's exploit being referred to, it was suggested that the favourite horse of one of the guests could also come up stairs. When the grey horse had been brought in and had been led round the table Leach Manning, a sporting farmer, undertook to ride him over the dinner-table,

dinner being still in progress. This he did, jumping him over the table on which were decanters and other appurtenances of a repast, and riding him back again.

The second "White Hart" Inn was built, as has been said, in 1813, the Rochester Room being preserved and only the older parts destroyed. Here, as at the "George" Hotel on the other side of the Market-place, were for a time some memorials of Eythorpe Hall; not in the form of pictures, however. It would seem that the whole of the fine stone frontage of Eythorpe Hall was carried away to give dignity to the new "White Hart." It was this second "White Hart" that played so great a part in the various election struggles of the Georgian era. The actual sign of the "White Hart" is still preserved on one of the smaller inns of the town.

Aylesbury has had an interesting political career, which practically begins with the first appearance of the name of Verney. Sir Edmund Verney sat for Aylesbury in the time of Charles the First. His son, Ralph, was a member during the Long Parliament—the father sitting for High Wycombe at the same time. In 1645 a motion was carried in the House of Commons disabling Ralph Verney from sitting in Parliament on account of his Royalist sympathies, and the same fate awaited his colleague, Sir John Pakington.¹ A new election

¹ The Pakingtons, although primarily a Worcestershire family bear a considerable part in the story of Aylesbury beginning with Sir John Pakington, a lawyer who died in 1560. In 1529 King Henry the Eighth gave him permission to wear his hat in his presence and in the presence of his successors. His nephew, Thomas Pakington, inherited large estates in Buckinghamshire, and was buried at Aylesbury, leaving a widow who acquired fame in her day by her political assertiveness. In 1572 she issued a writ in her own name as "Lord and owner of the town of Aylesbury" appointing burgesses for the constituency. Her son, Sir John Pakington, became a courtier of Queen Elizabeth, who called him "Lusty Pakington." The story is told of how the Queen gave him an estate in Suffolk of £800 a year, and how when he went to visit it he was so much affected by the misery of the dispossessed family that he refused to accept. This Pakington was Lord of the Manor of Aylesbury, the site of the Grey Friars

took place, when Thomas Scott, an attorney of Aylesbury, and Simon Mayne, of Dinton Hall, were returned. Scott and Mayne were among those who signed Charles's death-warrant; and Scott, in particular, became an important person under Cromwell's rule. He was executed as a regicide in 1660. Mayne, whom we meet again at Dinton, was brought to trial in 1661, but escaped execution, and died in the Tower. Incidentally we may mention among other regicides associated with Buckinghamshire, in addition to Mayne of Dinton and Scott of Aylesbury, Sir John d'Anvers, whose mother was a member of the Latimer family. Sir John was M.P. for Oxford in the last two Parliaments of Charles the First. He regularly attended the King's trial and signed the death-warrant. He died during the Commonwealth. The memory of a fourth regicide is preserved at Steeple Claydon in the Chaloner Free Library. Thomas Chaloner was born at Steeple Claydon. He signed Charles's death-warrant, and was Master of the Mint under the Commonwealth. At the Restoration he fled to Holland, where he died in 1661. He was the author of a pamphlet on *The Tomb of Moses* that imposed upon many archæologists. He built a school-house at Steeple Claydon in 1656 and endowed it with £12 per annum. This is now devoted to the service of the handsome free library, concerning which we must say something when we reach the Claydons.

Monastery having been his home. Of this no trace now exists, although there is a record of his entertaining James the First with great magnificence here in 1603. This Pakington was buried at Aylesbury in 1625. His son, John Pakington, sat in Parliament for Aylesbury in 1623-4, and was also buried here in the same year as his father. He had one son, John (1620-1680), who is mentioned above. He sat for Aylesbury until 1642, fought at Worcester for Charles the Second, twice had his estates confiscated, and altogether suffered much for his devotion to the Stuarts. Henceforth he was known at Hampton-Lovett, Worcestershire, with which the family name is mainly associated, although we have a member of the family, Sir John Pakington, supposed by some to be the original of Sir Roger de Coverley, sitting for Aylesbury in 1702.

Tragedy would seem to have involved all the members for Aylesbury during the troubled times of the Civil War, for the Royalist, Sir Edmund Verney, died at the battle of Edgehill in 1642, while Sir John Pakington suffered imprisonment in the Tower during the Protectorate. In the Parliament of Charles the Second we find Aylesbury represented by Thomas Lee of Hartwell and Richard Ingoldsby, both of whom we meet again in Buckinghamshire annals. Sir Richard Ingoldsby was a cousin of Hampden. He also had been a regicide, but, when put on his trial, declared that Cromwell compelled him to sign the death-warrant. He not only escaped, but was taken into favour by Charles, who made him a baronet. He died in 1685 and was buried at Hartwell, a place we shall visit the moment we leave Aylesbury. Thomas Lee was the fourth of his name to represent Aylesbury. He voted for the restoration of Charles, who made him a baronet as Sir Thomas Lee of Hartwell. He married a granddaughter of Sir John Suckling. Lee sat for Aylesbury through the period of the revolution that lost James the Second his throne, dying in the reign of William the Third. He was succeeded by Simon Mayne, a son of the regicide. Another Aylesbury politician in the Parliamentary annals of the reign of William and Mary was Robert Dormer, also a name that still lingers in the county. He became a judge, founded a peerage, and is buried in Quainton Church. There are many noteworthy names in the later Stuart and Georgian eras in Aylesbury politics; the best known are those of Thomas Wharton, Simon Harcourt, Nathaniel Mead, William Stanhope, and John Wilkes. Thomas Wharton (16481-715), who became a marquis, was the leading spirit in Buckinghamshire party strife in the last years of the seventeenth and the early years of the eighteenth century. His family seat was at Winchendon in this county. Macaulay says of him that "as a canvasser he was irresistible. He never forgot a face he had once seen. He remembered not only voters, but their families," and the historian further

reminds us that he expended eighty thousand pounds on elections, equivalent to three hundred thousand pounds in our time. But Wharton was never member for Aylesbury. Simon Harcourt, who took his seat in Queen Anne's reign, was the son of Sir Simon Harcourt of Wraysbury, whom we shall meet again, as he became Lord Chancellor, and a great figure in the county. In the beginning of George the First's reign we find this Simon Harcourt and Nathaniel Mead in opposition, and the latter is returned to Parliament. Mead was an Aylesbury man, as well as a London barrister. His brother, Robert, was an attorney at Aylesbury. At a later date a member of his family marries John Wilkes. William Stanhope, son of the Earl of Chesterfield, resided at Eythorpe, and he was once the owner of the pictures we have seen at the "George" Hotel. Stanhope was a member of the Hell Fire Club at Medmenham Abbey. He was elected for Aylesbury in 1727, that is to say, for the first Parliament of George the Second, but being also elected for the county, took his seat as M.P. for Buckinghamshire. In the last Parliament of George the Second John Wilkes was elected Member of Parliament for this town, but it was in the reign of George the Third that he gave Aylesbury so very considerable a measure of fame. Wilkes was a Buckinghamshire man, he having been born in Layton Beausert, now called Leighton Buzzard, which is in Bedfordshire; but the home of Wilkes's father was actually in Buckinghamshire, on the borders of the county. In 1749 Wilkes's connection with Aylesbury began by his marriage with Mary Mead of that town, the bride being thirty-two years of age and the bridegroom but twenty-two. The marriage was a dire failure, and soon after the birth of a daughter a separation took place. Wilkes, however, was devoted to his adopted town, and, in a letter to a friend in 1757, is enthusiastic over the "wonderful verdure of the rich vale of Aylesbury, and the fragrance of its bean-fields in full blossom." Wilkes wooed the town of Aylesbury for some years before he was elected, and suppers at the "White Hart"

are frequently referred to in his correspondence. He said that he would "never advise any gentleman to represent the town in which he lived, for his constituents would be a heavy perpetual incumbrance on his table and his wine cellar." As his unopposed election in 1757 cost him £7,000, we can appreciate his point of view. Wilkes's residence was the Prebendal House, which you will find skirting the left side of the churchyard as you walk toward the church from the town. It is a comfortable mansion with, however, but one relic of its most famous occupant. A small statuette of Wilkes "goes with the lease," exactly as do the pictures at the "George" Inn. A modest tomb upon the churchyard wall adjoining the Prebendal House is to one of Wilkes's servants, his gardener, William Smart. It is dated 1754 and bears a happy line from Virgil:—

"For him even the laurels, for him even the myrtles weep."

Wilkes's relations with the *North Briton*, his expulsion from the House of Commons in 1764 for seditious libel on King and Government, only come into the story in so far as that the quarrel involved a new writ for Aylesbury. Wilkes was returned for Middlesex in 1768 when "Wilkes and Liberty" became the cry of more than half the nation, and thus an Aylesbury resident became a popular idol. He said that he was never a "Wilkesite," nevertheless he was undoubtedly more of a patriot than has usually been conceded to him. He has suffered from the idea rendered popular by Macaulay and others that Liberty and Whiggery were always identical. Even his official and apologetic biographer, John Almon, is curiously unfair to Wilkes. While Wilkes was in Aylesbury he regularly served as a magistrate. That he was a communicating member of the church, to which he presented a pair of new doors for the west entrance, may be counted for hypocrisy by those who do not appreciate the contradictions of humanity. We meet him again when we come to visit Medmenham Abbey in this county. In 1774-75 Wilkes was Lord Mayor of London.

He died in 1797 at his daughter's residence in Grosvenor Square, and was buried in South Audley Street Chapel. One Anthony Bacon was returned for Aylesbury in 1764, when Wilkes was expelled from the House of Commons, and he sat until 1784. With him and his successors, although they include a number of the Grenville family, we are not impressed. Interest revives when, in 1812, Lord Nugent was elected for Aylesbury without opposition, and began a noteworthy career. Nugent was son of the Earl Temple, Marquis of Buckingham, whom we shall meet at Stowe, and was brother of the first Duke of Buckingham of that creation. Lord Nugent wrote the *Memorials of John Hampden*, and rendered many other services to literature. He sat for Aylesbury until 1832, residing at a house called "Lilies," and then took the post of Lord High Commissioner to the Ionian Islands. After his return to England he was three times defeated at Aylesbury, but he became its member once more in 1847, and sat for the borough until his death, which took place at "Lilies" in 1850. He commemorated Hampden, pre-eminently the political hero of Buckinghamshire, not only by his two volumes of *Memorials*, but also by the erection of an obelisk on Chalgrove Field. Another man of letters sat for Aylesbury in the intervening years—Winthrop Mackworth Praed—that is from 1837 until he died in 1839 at the early age of thirty-five. Praed was above all things a topical verse-maker, and the most successful of his verses are still widely read and admired. As a Parliamentarian he did not shine overmuch. He sat first for St. Germain's, which borough became extinct at the Reform Bill of 1832. Later he sat for Great Yarmouth, and finally for Aylesbury. Yet another Member of Parliament for Aylesbury who had some small fame in his day was John Peter Deering, an architect and a Royal Academician. In the former capacity he designed the now destroyed Exeter Hall, once famous in missionary annals. Deering's representation of Aylesbury was almost too brief to be worth recording. Upon his election in 1847 he

was successfully appealed against. He lived at Lee near Great Missenden. Richard Bethell, afterwards Lord Chancellor Westbury, sat for Aylesbury in 1851, and he had Sir Austen Layard as colleague. Bethell it was who, when first offered the post of Solicitor-General, said that he "did not see the force of giving up fourteen thousand a year, and the pleasure of making very good speeches, for that of taking five thousand a year and the misery of listening to very bad ones." Layard is best remembered by his excavations at Nineveh, and his books upon that city are still widely read. He was member for Aylesbury from 1852 to 1857, and later became the British Ambassador to Spain and to Turkey. He died in 1894.

Aylesbury has too few associations in bricks and mortar with all these distinguished men, and nothing to remind us of the fair Anne Boleyn, "myne awne darling" as Henry the Eighth called her in a little known love-letter. Her father, Sir Thomas Boleyn, was "Lord of the Toune of Ailesburie." From the point of view of the lover of the picturesque and the old-time memorial too much of it is new. This is particularly the case with its most conspicuous buildings—the Corn Exchange, the County Hall and the Clock Tower. The first two, best known as the Market Buildings, on the site of the old "White Hart," were opened in 1864, the Clock Tower in the centre of the Market Place dates from 1877. On Saturday the market is held, and with its various stalls and booths offers a lively scene. We recall one evening a Cheap Jack who in many particulars vividly reminded us of Charles Dickens's creation Doctor Marigold.

From the Market Place we direct our steps towards the church, passing through Bourbon Street, known in earlier days as Water Street, Waterman Street, and Brewer Street. Its present name recalls the residence of Louis the Eighteenth and his family at Hartwell House, two miles away. The King passed down Brewer Street on his way to London in 1814 and the

inhabitants called it Bourbon Street thenceforth. More pleasing, however, is the road to the right which takes us direct to the church. Aylesbury church is a fine example of the Early English style of architecture dating from the thirteenth century. Under the Lady Chapel are traces of an ancient crypt, and it is a tradition that here was once a Saxon church of the ninth or tenth century, in which St. Osyth was buried before her body was removed to the abbey of Chich in Essex. Osyth was the daughter of a Saxon king of the seventh century, and was



The Norman Font, Aylesbury.

educated by the abbess Modwenna, who, it is said, sent her to another abbess—Edith the sister of King Alfred—with a book. She was blown into the water while crossing a bridge and sank, but three days later she reappeared safe and well. The Danes in one of their raids slew Osyth and beheaded her because she refused to renounce her religion. When they had gone she rose, took up her head after the fashion of St. Denis, and walked to the church

at Chich. As, however, King Frithwald, her father, lived near Aylesbury, she was buried here. But the legend goes on to tell us that she appeared to a blacksmith and said that she wished to be buried at Chich: hence her reinterment there. As with most churches in England the history of Aylesbury church is one of constant restorations one of which Sir Gilbert Scott superintended in 1848, while a very effective restoration was not completed until 1869. The gem of the church is the baptismal font, a fine piece of Norman work ornamented with banded foliage. The most notable monument is to the wife of Sir Henry Lee of Quarrendon, a daughter of Lord Paget, with her three children. Lady

Lee died in 1584. The inscription is quaint enough to quote :—

Entombed here dothe rest a worthie dame,
 Extract and born of noble house and blood,
 Her sire Lord Paget night of worthie fame,
 Whose virtues cannot sink into le flood
 Two brethren had she Baro's of this recluse,
 A knight heer freere Sir Henry Lee be night
 To whom she bare three impes which had to names
 Thou, Henry, Mary slayne by fortunes spight,
 First two bei'g young which carsd ther pare 'ts mo'e,
 The third in flower a'd prime of all her yeares.
 All thre do rest within this marble stone
 By whiche the fickle'es of worldly ioyes appears,
 Good fre'd sticke but to strew with crimso' flowers
 This marble stone wherein her cindres rest.
 For sure her ghost lyes with the heave'ly powers,
 And gverdon hathe of virtvovs life possesst.

Sir Henry Lee is buried at Quarrendon, as we shall see in due course. Lady Lee's father, Lord Paget, was Ambassador to France in the time of Henry the Eighth.

Tradition tells of a time when Aylesbury churchyard, now so carefully railed off from the footpaths, was the scene of cock-fighting, card-playing, and other Hogarthian exploits, and when soldiers were flogged there on occasion. Even up to the beginning of the nineteenth century the elections were held here, and the rival candidates addressed their constituents from the tombstones. This was a survival of the days of the churchyard cross from which the priest of an earlier age preached to his flock. We shall come across many of these crosses in Buckingham churchyards, although there is no trace of one in Aylesbury. Our reference to the railings of the churchyard recalls that in the churchwarden's record for 1779 it was ordered that "no hog, sow, or pig be suffered to go about the churchyards; if so they shall be pounded."

The Monastery of Aylesbury belonged to the Grey Friars or Franciscans, and was founded in 1386 by James Botelier, third

Earl of Ormonde. The "stone man" now in the church, a knight in armour sculptured in marble, is supposed to be his effigy, although Botelier was buried far from here in 1405. It was found many years ago in the Friarage. All traces of the monastic buildings have disappeared, the only survival that recalls it being the public footway that for generations has borne the name of "the Friarage." Let us not forget the well-appointed Museum which we pass on our right as we approach the Church. It contains many archæological and geological treasures and a good collection of Buckinghamshire literature.

CHAPTER III

FROM AYLESBURY TO THAME

OF the six important roads out of Aylesbury one leads to London by Wendover, a second to Tring, a third to Buckingham, a fourth to Waddesdon and Bicester, a fifth to Leighton Buzzard by Hulcott, and a sixth to Hartwell and Thame. Let us make the journey to Thame first, although that pleasant town, being in Oxfordshire, does not come into our story except so far as that here John Hampden was educated, and here to the Greyhound Inn he came from the battle of Charlgrove Field to die—and to be carried to his last resting-place in Buckinghamshire earth. A mile or so along the Thame road and we are at the gates of Hartwell House, associated with the career of Louis the Eighteenth of France. The will of Alexander Hampden, made in 1617, records that he left his Hartwell estate to his sister Eleanor, wife of Sir Thomas Lee of Claydon, and the property has remained in that family ever since, although recent inheritors of the estate are only descended in the female line, and have merely taken the name of Lee. In George the Second's reign one of the family was Lord Chief Justice of England. Sir Thomas Lee added considerably to the house, and to him are ascribed the carved figures on the staircase. These quaint figures which make the staircase of Hartwell House unique in its way were removed while the Royal Family of France was in residence, gossip says because the Queen, who was a confirmed

inebriate, was annoyed by the shadows they threw as she ascended the stairs. The figures, each about two feet high, are varied in character. One represents Samson with the jawbone of an ass, another Hercules in the lion's skin. It is clear that the statues were not restored to their original situation after the departure of the French Court.

The Count of Provence, afterwards Louis the Eighteenth, had many wanderings after the Revolution. For a time he was in Germany, first at Coblenz, afterwards at Lippe in Westphalia, where he heard of the death of his brother Louis the Sixteenth. Thence he went to Turin and later to Verona, where he heard of the death of the Dauphin, the so-called Louis the Seventeenth. Henceforth the exiles and their supporters throughout Europe called him "king." In 1796 Louis was expelled from Verona, and a like fate awaited him when he went to Austria. Finally his wanderings took him to Russia in 1798, when the Emperor Paul the First received him with enthusiasm, and at Mittau he had quite a splendid court. Here he was joined by the Queen, from whom he had been separated for eight years, and by his niece Madame Royale, the prisoner from the Temple, who was married at Mittau to the Duke of Angoulême. A little later Paul allied himself with Napoleon, and Louis was asked to leave Russia. He went to Warsaw, but with the accession of Alexander to the throne of Russia he was able to return to Mittau. The Treaty of Tilsit, by which Alexander and Napoleon were made allies, drove the French Pretender once more on his travels, and in October 1808 he became the guest of England. Our Government suggested Scotland and offered him hospitality at Holyrood Palace. He declined to go to Scotland, declaring that he would rather return to the Continent. Then the Marquis of Buckingham entertained him at Gosfield Hall, Essex. In April, 1808, Louis took possession of Hartwell House as the tenant of the Rev. Sir George Lee, who as a clergyman and rector of Beachampton had been accustomed to "let" his ancestral home. Here Louis as Comte

de Lille held his court until 1814. The rent was £500 per annum. The house had to be altered in every detail in order to accommodate the 180 people who composed Louis's establishment. Small huts were erected in the garden for the servants; rooms were divided into two, and altogether it was a dilapidated Hartwell which the Lee family had returned on their hands in 1814. Several trifling relics of the Bourbon sojourn are still in evidence. For one, the coping knocked off the upper windows in order to permit a "look-out," we can hardly blame these tenants. Another memorial has a measure of our sympathy. The room devoted to the Queen's Maids of Honour has a fine wall-paper representing pheasants on the wing. Think of a wall-paper that has lasted a hundred years! Yet the only serious flaw in the paper to-day is the white space which indicates that one of these Maids of Honour cut away a pheasant to carry away to France as a souvenir of Hartwell days. There are other reminders of Louis, although the King left little of a personal nature behind. We are shown the King's room, the Queen's room, and so on through many chambers that have their associations with the Comte d'Artois, the Duc de Berri, and other well-known people. In the King's room we may see the *prie-dieu* at which the King practised his devotions, and above the quite modern bed we see a flag with *fleur de lys*. This flag floated over Hartwell while the Royal Pretender was residing there. The bed in the Queen's room is the one on which she died. For the would-be Queen of France died here on November 13, 1810, and was buried with much pomp in Westminster Abbey, this being, it must be supposed, a form of demonstration against Napoleon. In March 1811 the body was removed to Sardinia, "where," as the author of *Ædes Hartwellianæ* says, "I afterwards saw the coffin in the splendid crypt of Cagliari Cathedral." There were yet more than three years of exile before her husband, but on April 20, 1814, Louis left Hartwell to return to France. The Prince Regent went as far as Stanmore

to meet him. The people unharnessed the horses from the royal carriage and drew it towards London. The procession went at a walking pace after reaching Kilburn, and crowds greeted it as it passed through Hyde Park and down Piccadilly. The royal party spent three days in London and then crossed to France from Dover. Louis's two unfortunate reigns, with Napoleon's Hundred Days intervening, do not belong to our story.

Hartwell was not forgotten when Louis came to the throne. The Lees were the richer by the *prie-dieu* we have mentioned, by a portrait of the King and a few prints. Other relics mentioned in Lipscomb's book do not seem to be any longer at Hartwell. The Hartwell poor, and those of the neighbouring village of Stone, were rewarded by the results of the sale of all Louis's personal belongings, and indeed there is a small sum distributed at this day, being the interest on the hundred pounds thus set aside. Louis seems to have remembered his place of exile while on the throne of France. He laid out an English garden at Versailles modelled upon the one at Hartwell. He invited Sir George Lee to visit him at the Tuileries. When Sir George was in Paris early in 1815 he presented himself, but found the whole court in agitation. Bonaparte had escaped from Elba! Louis afterwards sent Lee his portrait. A more melancholy trait has to be recorded. One may easily find in Hartwell churchyard two worn tombs, side by side with indecipherable inscriptions. They are the most neglected graves in the churchyard. These are the graves of the Comte de la Chapelle and Dr. Colignon, who died at Hartwell during the exile. After the interval of a century a descendant of one of these men visited Hartwell, expecting to find a magnificent tomb to the memory of his ancestor, for in the family records was a letter in which the King had promised such a memorial. The two bare, sordid-looking tombstones offer reflection for the moralist. This was told to us a month or two before his death by the then owner, Colonel Lee, of Hartwell, who died in 1910.

On the death of Sir George Lee in 1827 without children, Hartwell came to the next heir male in blood, Dr. John Lee. Dr. Lee was an enthusiastic man of science and an antiquarian. He employed his friend Captain, afterwards Admiral, Smyth to place on record an account of his treasures at Hartwell under the title of *Ædes Hartwellianæ*, including many wonderful astronomical and Egyptian curiosities. But the observatory has been pulled down and the Egyptian antiquities dispersed. There is still a good collection of geological specimens forming a quite creditable museum.

At Hartwell we have perhaps stayed too long, for there are many Buckinghamshire houses of equal or greater interest. Returning then to the Thame road, and passing a monument to George the Second in the park, we devote a moment to the church, built in 1753 on the model of the Chapter House at York. It is octagon shaped, with the arms of the three associated families of Lee, Harcourt, and Hampden upon shields. The ceiling is groined in the style of King's College, Cambridge. Tombs that pertained to an earlier church on the same site are in the vaults. The old churchyard was levelled and inclosed in the gardens of the mansion when the new church was built, hence the curious circumstance that the present churchyard is separated by the road from the church.

Yet another mile's walk takes us to Stone, where we see the County Lunatic Asylum. There are more romantic associations. Stone has traces of a remarkable pit, probably a place of sepulture during the Roman occupation. It was once the estate of Bishop Odo, the half-brother to William the Conqueror, and we find the names of John de Bracy and Gilbert de Bracy among the owners of the manors of Stone and Hartwell. As Sir Walter Scott went to the Buckinghamshire village of Ivinghoe for his novel of *Ivanhoe*, so it would seem probable that he went to yet another village in the county for the redoubtable knight Maurice de Bracy. Later still we find Sir Richard Empson, one of the instruments of Henry

the Seventh's extortions, as the owner of Stone. One of the brasses in the church indicates that "Thomas Gorney and Agnes his Wyf" were buried here in 1472, while the tablet shows eight children kneeling at their feet. Thomas has disappeared in the usual raid upon brasses and another figure has taken his place. The Gorney or Gurney family continued to belong to Stone until the beginning of the nineteenth century. The font has a bowl of the twelfth century; the carving including a man, a serpent, a lion, a dragon, and other quaint subjects is interesting. This font has had unusual adventures. It was originally in the church of Hampstead Norris, in Berkshire. In 1767 this church received the gift of a new font, not near as valuable, we may be sure, as the old one which the rector removed to his garden. It was later on conveyed to London, where it had at least two homes before it was recognised as a fine piece of Norman work; the whitewash was scraped off, and it was presented to Stone. The church dates from very early times, there being traces of enlargements in the twelfth, the thirteenth, and the fourteenth centuries. Modern restoration has, however, been carried on with the usual thoroughness.

At Stone a road crosses the high-road to Thame leading on the right to Eythorpe Park, on the left to Bishopstone. Neither journey need delay us unless one wants to reach the Bicester road from Aylesbury by a pleasant walk through the two adjoining parks of Eythorpe and Waddesdon. The latter we pass on its other side another day. Eythorpe, a mile and a half to the left, had once an interesting manor house, where were the pictures we have seen at the "George" Hotel, Aylesbury. It was destroyed in 1812, as already stated. It had been in the hands of the Dormers and Stanhopes, from 1535 onwards. Eythorpe House was a splendid residence in its day, with park, gardens, and ornamental waters. The house, says Mr. Fowler, of Aylesbury, "was approached by a classic bridge flanked on either side with statues of great size and elegance." Lord Chesterfield, its owner at the beginning of

the nineteenth century, was, Mr. Fowler continues, confidently expecting to be made Lord-Lieutenant of the County, as the then occupant was dying. When Lord Chesterfield returned to lunch one morning he was greeted with the news that Baron Cobham had received from Pitt the promise of the Lord-Lieutenancy. Chesterfield left Eythorpe the next day and never set foot in the county again. A year or two afterwards he gave orders for the destruction of the mansion. The



Dinton.

Rothschild family has now a pleasant residence near the site of the old house.

A mile and a half from Stone we reach Dinton, a little to the left of the high road. It is a village of singular charm. The old cottages and the stocks with a fragment of the cross in the churchyard form but part of the attraction. The Norman doorway in the church will also command attention. There are few finer extant. The adjoining manor house is honour-

ably associated with one of the heroes of the Commonwealth, Simon Mayne, who as a signatory to Charles the First's death-warrant had a rough time on the coming of the second Charles. Mayne died in the Tower in 1661, aged fifty-nine. He was not a very heroic figure, and his fight for life at his trial makes pathetic reading. Still he was a high-minded patriot, rightly impatient of the misgovernment of his country. Mayne was buried in Dinton church, but it is his father whose mural monument we see with a black marble tablet inscribed :

Here lyeth ye bodie of Symon Mayne late of Dynton Esq. who had to wife Coilubery Lovelace daughter of Richard Lovelace of Hurley in the County of Bark Esq. By whom he had issue one sone and one daughter Symon and Coilrbevy. He died the 13 day of July the 40 yere of his age Anno domini 1617. In remembrance of whom Coilubury his wife as a token of her never ending love hath caused this monument to be erected.

When "Coilubery" died in 1628 another brass plate was put up with a further inscription. There was a third Simon Mayne, a son of the regicide, who represented Aylesbury in Parliament.

In Dinton Church we also find a black marble slab to Colonel Richard Beke, who was a great favourite with Oliver Cromwell, marrying the Protector's niece, Lavinia Whetstone. Beke was knighted by Richard Cromwell just before the Restoration, but he made his peace with the King. He married later a daughter of Sir Thomas Lee of Hartwell, and sat in Parliament for Aylesbury from 1686 to 1690, and then for Wendover to 1700. He died in 1707.

But no inscription of the many in the church is quite as interesting as two that may be found in the churchyard. One is inscribed.

"To the memory of Samuel Paine, who died February 21st, 1849, aged 80," and thus records his career :—

" I've plodded thro' life's weary way,
In various callings of the day.

A ploughboy first, in Suffolk born,
 I turned straight furrows for the corn,
 In days when farmers lodged their men,
 And held their conduct under ken.
 The squires chariot next I drove ;
 By industry to rise I strove.
 I then, alas ! engaged an inn,
 Temptation strong to vice and sin.
 Ere long I left the revel scene,
 For purer ways and more serene,
 And village children next did train
 And aimed subjection to maintain,
 To God, to Parents, Pastors, Masters,
 And guide them thus through life's disasters.
 Now my works in death are ended ;
 Worthless all with error blended.
 In penitence and faith, O Lord !
 I lean on Christ, the incarnate Word.
 At the Archangel's thrilling blast,
 Oh ! take me to thyself at last."

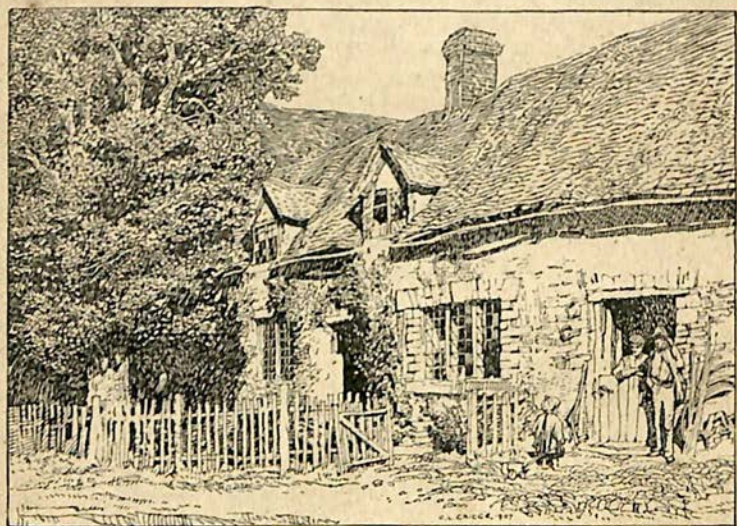
'The other runs as follows :—

"To the memory of Henry Wootton, Farmer, of this Parish, who died on
 the 15th day of June, 1857, aged 89.

" I've ploughed my land and sown it too ;
 I've cleaned it, drest, and drained it thro' !
 My Landlord sends me word to quit,
 To him in duty I submit.
 He bids me seek another soil
 In pastures green, and free from toil
 And tells me thro' his Son to stand,
 The occupant of better land,
 No matter whether clay or sand.
 At first I thought it hard to leave,
 My heart's now changed, I cease to grieve,
 In Christ's my faith ; I hope to rise
 And reap my harvest in the skies."

In the Hall are one or two reminiscences of the Commonwealth period, in particular a portrait of Cromwell with his secretary Thurloe, and a sword, said to have been left here by

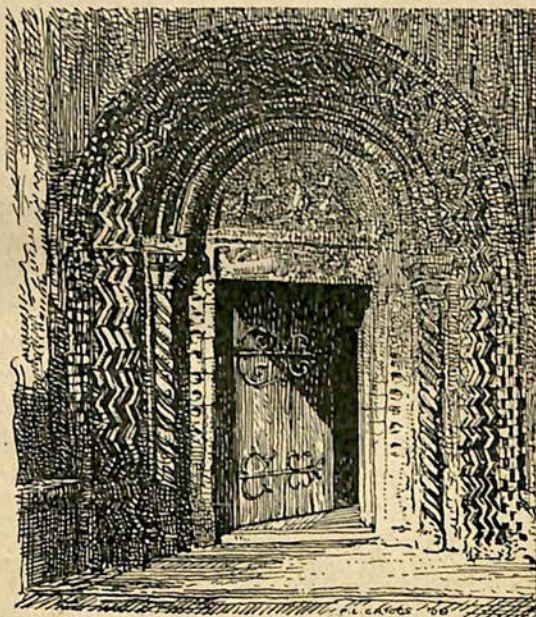
the Protector on the occasion of a visit. The so-called hiding place of Mayne where, as the too lurid guide-book says, "he could crawl up a sort of tunnel and take refuge in one of the gables, and thus hide from his enemies, and escape for a time his just punishment," was probably the usual "priest's hole" of the old country house. In any case Mayne surrendered immediately a warrant was made out against him. The hidden chamber in question was destroyed in 1857. Among the



The Forge, Dinton.

many curious relics at Dinton Hall is an old shoe that had belonged to the famous Dinton hermit. This was John Bigg, who had been a kind of secretary to Simon Mayne. Bigg doubtless took his master's too early death and the failure of his cause much to heart, and developed eccentricities accordingly. He is reported to have lived in a cave near the Hall, and to have clothed himself entirely in scraps of leather fastened together—a thousand pieces in all, it has been said. Lipscomb gives his portrait from an old engraving, first published in 1787 and

probably entirely imaginary. It was a local theory, widely accepted, that Bigg was the executioner of Charles the First—that he was the man in the mask—but this is clearly impossible. The companion shoe to that in Dinton Hall is preserved in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford.



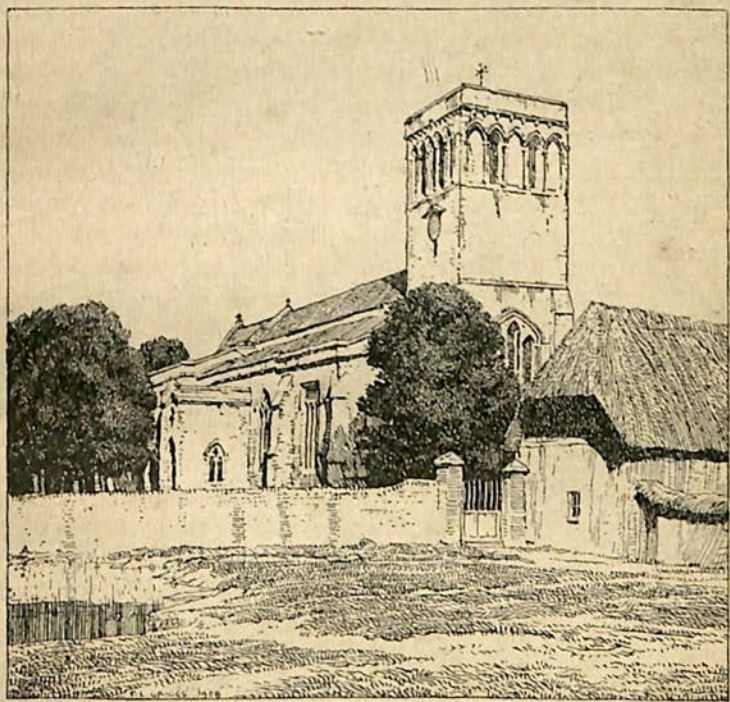
Norman Doorway, at Dinton.

CHAPTER IV

ASTON SANDFORD, ILMER AND LONG CRENDON

It is only ten miles from Aylesbury to Thame and we have already made half the journey. But for the moment we will not continue our journey to Thame, which, although it is in Oxfordshire, we are certain to visit while we are in this part of the country. Soon after leaving Dinton we turn to the right for Haddenham or to the left for Cuddington, the point where the four roads meet being known as King's Cross. Let us turn to the right and visit Haddenham, which indeed may now be reached by the new line of the Great Central railway from Marylebone. A good church with a green and a pond near by is always picturesque, and on a fine day, with the sun shining, the numerous ducks upon the pond at Haddenham give this open space, sometimes called Church Square, a very distinctive appearance. The many old houses and cottages around; and the lych-gate to the church, add to the charm. Apart from this general effect Haddenham need not detain us many minutes. The church dates from the thirteenth century, but was over-restored in 1864. There is a good font with a dragon on the bowl. We hasten on to Aston Sandford, the tiniest of villages, but for ever associated with a great and good man, Thomas Scott, usually called "The Commentator." Cardinal Newman tells us in his *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, that while an undergraduate he greatly admired the writer, who

"made a deeper impression on my mind than any other to whom (humanly speaking) I almost owe my soul, Thomas Scott, of Aston Sandford. I thought of making a visit to his Parsonage, in order to see a man whom I so deeply revered. I hardly think I could have given up the idea of this expedition,



Haddenham Church.

even after I had taken my degree ; for the news of his death in 1821 came upon me as a disappointment as well as a sorrow." Scott's *Essays*, he tells us, had planted deeply in his mind an acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity. For years I used almost as proverbs what I considered to be the scope and issue of his doctrine, "Holiness rather than peace" and

"Growth the only evidence of life." Scott, the son of a grazier, was born at Braytoft, in Lincolnshire, in 1747. Among many small ecclesiastical appointments he had previously held two Buckinghamshire curacies, first at Weston Underwood and later at Olney. At Olney he succeeded John Newton, and became in his turn a friend of the poet Cowper, then resident there. It can scarcely be doubted but that he exercised a more healthy-minded influence than did Newton upon the finely sensitive nature of the poet. Cowper revised one of Scott's books, a narrative of his religious development called *The Force of Truth*. In 1788 Scott commenced that great *Commentary* on the Bible which was for nearly a century to command an enormous religious audience, and which Sir James Stephen described as "the greatest theological performance of our age and country." In 1785 he had been made preacher to the Lock Hospital. Scott left London to take up the modest rectory of Aston Sandford, which we are now visiting, because of his health. He was here from 1801 until his death in 1821. The living was worth less than £100 a year. It is pleasant to think of him here in this pretty village and among these quiet surroundings. Unfortunately, Scott's rectory was pulled down in 1838 and the present building was erected on the site. The church in which Scott preached has been greatly transformed. It dated from the thirteenth century but was restored in 1877. An illustration of Scott's church will be found hanging in the vestry of the restored church. It bears the following inscription:—

"This plate formed the frontispiece to a volume of Scott's Sermons published in 1828, and shows the Church as in Scott's time with the window to right of porch extended to the ground, and enlarged that through it Scott might preach to people in a tent erected in Churchyard, and close to the enlarged window. This plate and frame made of old oak from roof timber of church was presented by G. A. Shaw, rector of Aston, 1874-81."

The mural monument to Scott runs as follows:—

Near this spot are deposited the remains of the Rev. Thomas Scott,

Twenty Years Rector of this Parish. He died April 16th, 1821, aged 74 years. But in his writings he will long remain and widely proclaim to mankind the Unsearchable Riches of Christ.

A slab in the pavement informs us that *The Rev. Thomas Scott, Rector, died April XVI, MDCCCXXI aged LXXIV years.* The funeral sermon on Scott was preached by Daniel Wilson, afterwards Bishop of Calcutta, at Haddenham, as Aston Sandford Church was counted too small. One pamphlet by Scott has reference to another Buckinghamshire worthy. This is a sermon preached in 1803 on the death of the Rev. Jeremiah Newell, Vicar of Great Missenden, with a brief memoir.

We may continue our journey southward to Ilmer, crossing the high road that runs between Thame and Princes Risborough. Ilmer or Ilmere has the distinction of possessing a churchyard of some size in which are many mounds indicating graves but not a single tombstone or monument.¹ There are only twelve houses in Ilmer but it may be presumed that death sometimes visits these. The Manor-house, a comfortable residence not far from the church, recalls the fact that the Manor of Ilmer was formerly held on the tenure that its owner was Marshall of the King's hawks and falcons. Ilmer church was restored in 1860, and we sigh over the completeness of this restoration. But doubtless the even more recent restoration of the tower—a wooden one being now substituted for stone—was essential. One of the three bells is probably 400 years old. The only thing interesting inside the church is the window, in the lower part of which are two curious pieces of sculpture, one representing the figure of God the Father and the Holy Dove, the other St. Christopher bearing the infant Christ across a stream.

From Ilmer we return to the high-road that leads through Kingsey to Thame. Kingsey, in common with so many Buckinghamshire villages, has nothing of interest apart from the

¹ "A Bucks Woman," in the *Bucks Herald*, June 26, 1909, recalls one wooden tomb having stood in this churchyard in her youth.

church, which is dedicated to St. Nicholas. The village has not grown much in the centuries. In 1712 it contained 24 houses, in 1828 there were 36 houses. In 1801 the population was double what it is to-day. There were then 165 inhabitants. In the census of 1901 there were 85. The church was rebuilt in the 18th century. Of the older church the first Vicar was Simon de Wotesden, who was presented in 1232 to the "Vicarage of the chapel of Kingsey." Over the communion table there is a painting of Christ bearing His cross. Thomas Boller, of "Kyngesey," by his will in 1532 directed his interment in St. Nicholas's Church before the image of our Lady, and bequeathed wax and barley "to her light there, the rode and sepulchre lights ; to the church a chalys, a banner or streamer of St. George, another of the Virgin, another of St. Catherine, and a cloth to bear above the sacrament." -

From Kingsey we can continue our road to Thame to see what remains of the house in which John Hampden died, and the school in which he was educated, and thence take the turning to Long Crendon, the place in this district which will most attract us. Or we can retrace our steps though Haddenham to the high-road between Dinton and Thame, to the "King's Cross," to which I have already referred, a name that has no history, although an ancient barrow was once formed on the spot. To our right is the road to Cuddington, which we reach very quickly. The church here has some quaint inscriptions on its walls. There is one to Mary Baker who died in 1708, aged 32 :-

I two Three Chil-dren late gave birth,
And with the fourth lie here wrapt up in earth.
Here lies buried by each other
Three of the Chil-dren and the Mother.

At Cuddington we see on the green a sign-post directing us to Chearsley, but if we are sufficiently zealous we can pass half way to Chearsley, to the right, and visit Lower Winchendon, and even continue on the road to Upper Winchendon, which

lies between Eythorpe Park and Waddesdon Park. We have a view of Waddesdon House on our right as we speed along. Formerly the two Winchendons were called Nether and Over Winchendon, and they derive their names from the Anglo-Saxon Wychen Springs, and don an eminence. The Manor House of Lower Winchendon, or Winchendon Priory, is described by Lipscomb as possessed of many interesting portraits, but probably none of these are now there. It formerly belonged to Notley Abbey, but was partly rebuilt by Sir John Dauncy, a Judge in the reign of Henry the Eighth. It is a pretty village and there are some interesting brasses in the church. Lower Winchendon was the birthplace of a Buckinghamshire woman of note in Lettice, daughter of Sir Francis Knollys, one of the courtiers of Edward the Sixth. She succeeded Amy Robsart as the wife of Elizabeth's favourite, the Earl of Leicester. Lettice had formerly been the wife of the Earl of Essex who died in 1576. Leicester died in 1578. Lettice's third husband, Sir Christopher Blount, died on the scaffold in 1601. She lived until 1634, having seen seven sovereigns on the throne of England.

The estates of Upper Winchendon were granted by Charles the First to Sir Francis Goodwyn, whose grand-daughter, Jane, married Philip, fourth Lord Wharton. His main associations are with Wooburn in this county. His wife, Jane Goodwyn, was connected by marriage with the Hampdens and the Fleetwoods. He was excepted from the Act of Indemnity when Charles the Second came to the throne, but escaped by the intercession of his daughter Elizabeth, wife of Lord Willoughby d'Eresby. Wharton went abroad during James the Second's reign and declared promptly for William of Orange, his real sympathies being, in common with nearly all the other leading men of this county, on the side of civil and religious liberty. To his son, the fifth lord, we have already referred in our chapter on Aylesbury. He became Viscount Winchendon and Marquis of Wharton in 1706, and played a very

considerable part in the political life of his time. He was a popular Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland in 1708-10. He was buried at Winchendon, and his only son Philip, who succeeded him in 1715, was speedily made a Duke by George the First. The new duke's mad genius grew more and more pronounced as the years went on. His professed devotion to the exiled Stuarts had little of the piety and chivalry that much of that devotion implied with others. Finally he died in Spain in 1731.

After the death of the Duke of Wharton the Over Winchendon estates and Manor House fell into the hands of the Great Duke of Marlborough, and at his death were owned by Duchess Sarah. Charles Second Duke of Marlborough pulled down the fine house, and scattered the pictures. The gardens, in the Dutch style, have also disappeared. Perhaps the most interesting thing in the little church where the Goodwyns and the Whartons lie buried is an entry in the Registry :—

Thomas, Son of his Grace Philip Duke of Wharton, was baptised 29th March, 1719, and was buried 4th March in the same year, 1719.

This perfectly correct statement happened through the alteration from the Old to the New Style at this time. The child was actually a year old all but seven days. The church is reached by turning off the high-road through a gate, and one is struck by its beautiful situation. The views that meet the eye on every side are exceptionally striking.

We return from Upper to Lower Winchendon and from Lower Winchendon to Chearsley. We pass the full length of the village, which has an old world air, before we reach the church, crossing even the road that leads to Long Crendon to which we shall have to return. A little beyond the church is the river Thame, but it is not visible from the churchyard. There are two brass effigies in the chancel to "John Ffrankeleyn and Margarete his wyff" with his three sons and four daughters; there is a circular font with a trefoil border, and there are three

mural tablets to the family of Kipling—not ancestors, we may add in passing, of the distinguished novelist. In a stone in the nave William Egelton who died in 1792 is made to say :

Weep not for me, my wife and children dear,
I am not dead, but do sleep here :
In this cold grave I be at rest
In hopes to rise among the just.

A pleasant walk along the well known Angel Way, a Roman road, takes us to Long Crendon, but we shall pass down a field-path on our left when we come to a white gate between Chearsley and Crendon, in order to visit what remains of Nutley or Notley Abbey. The guide books may lead us to expect a farm house, much after the fashion of Burnham Abbey, with an interesting barn forming part of the Abbey open to inspection. Such slight fragments of the abbey as remain, however, are now absorbed in a substantial modern mansion, into which strangers cannot well intrude. The Abbey, which stood on this site, was founded in 1162 by Walter Gifford, second Earl of Buckingham, and Ermengard his Countess, for Monks of the Augustinian order, following the customs of Arrouaise. These monks were clothed in a white woollen tunic. They abstained from meat, and observed strict silence. In 1539 Abbot Ridge took his pension of £100 per annum, subscribed to the King's supremacy, and he enjoyed his pension until his death in 1583—well on in Queen Elizabeth's reign. Notley or Nutley Abbey possibly owes its name to the nut trees which were abundant in the woods of the neighbourhood.

Long Crendon is said to have derived its name from a green hill on which it is situated, and its prefix may have been given it to distinguish it from Grendon Underwood. Both suggested derivations are, however, improbable. In Domesday Book it is called "Credendone" and in a map of 1610, "Crandon." Its population in 1801 was 991, and in 1901 it was 1075, so that it increased by exactly eighty-four souls in the century.

Perhaps Buckinghamshire alone of English counties has this element of stagnancy. Some of its villages had just as large a population when England contained four millions as to-day, when England contains nearly forty millions. Crendon did



Long Crendon.

indeed once have a spurt of the manufacturing interests that make for England's great population. In the 'fifties its population numbered 1,700, but this was doubtless due to the manufacture of needles, which grew up and afterwards declined. The place has very tangible association with the Roman occupation

of Britain, as Lipscomb gives illustrations of Roman lamps and urns that were found here when, in 1824, a Roman cemetery was unearthed. The manor belonged after the Conquest to Walter Gifford, first Earl of Buckingham, and afterwards to his son Walter, the second Earl, who, as we have seen, founded Nutley Abbey. In the sixteenth century these lands were held by the family of Dormer—a family that plays so large a part in Buckinghamshire annals. Indeed the most



Long Crendon.

noticeable object in the church is the beautifully decorated tomb to Sir John Dormer and "Dame Jane his wife." Sir John died in 1626. Many brasses have disappeared—some have been re-fixed in the walls. The font with its couchant lions at base is exceptionally fine. The bells were recast from the metal of those that belonged to the Abbey of Nutley before the Reformation. The Registers are kept in an iron chest in what is now the vestry. Mr. S. E. Moffat, who has described them, tells us that formerly the church was kept

open, but that several years ago some unknown persons entered the building, piled up the chairs in the centre, and set fire to them—a circumstance which should make the tourist in Buckinghamshire moderate somewhat the constant irritation from which he suffers at his inability to enter the churches. In very few places, however, are the keys so easily obtainable as at Long Crendon. The same writer tells us that a large proportion of the names that obtained in Crendon in the seventeenth century are still borne by persons in the village and neighbourhood to-day.

A very little way from the church we come to what is known as Long Crendon Court-House. Dr. Lipscomb, writing in 1849, makes no mention of the building, which probably had many round it not dissimilar at that time: Sheahan, writing in 1862, tells us that the building was called the Old Staple Hall. The house was saved from destruction a few years ago by the National Trust and carefully restored. It is claimed that Walter Beauchamp, great-steward to Henry the Fifth's Queen Catherine, held several courts here in the reign of Henry the Sixth, and that when the estates of Long Crendon were granted to All Souls' College, Oxford, in the fifteenth century, the warden and scholars held their court here. It is, in any case, a handsome and interesting structure. The Manor Farm has a fine gateway and in its kitchen we find a beautiful example of fifteenth century timber work. Scattered through the village we may see many examples of the square moulded windows of the Tudor period, notably at the Crown Inn, which boasts an overmantel with Tudor costumes figured thereon.

CHAPTER V

BRILL AND BOARSTALL

FROM Long Crendon we follow a road that after two miles takes us to Chilton. Here we are three miles and a half from Thame and eight miles and a half from Aylesbury. We see before us a beautiful manor-house with the church in the background. There are many half-timbered cottages, with thatched roofs, and from the churchyard we obtain a view of their neatly cultivated flower-beds. The church is particularly interesting, with its fine oak roof, its hour glass attached to the pulpit reminding us of days when the preacher well answered the description of "pious but painful." Its most interesting tomb is one to Sir John Croke, who died in 1608, and his wife, Elizabeth, who died in 1611. This fine tomb presents the two life-size recumbent figures of Sir John, in plate armour, and his wife in black, with a hood and ruff. Their eleven children are seen kneeling below. This tomb is in a chapel divided by an oak screen from the chancel. Above the screen may be seen a helmet said to belong to the Croke family, but certainly long prior to Sir John. A banner with the crest of Croke—a swan's neck—is also here. The verger will push aside deal boards, over which you would otherwise walk unconsciously, and will show you the half forgotten tombs of other knights. Sir John Croke was knighted while Speaker of the House of Commons. He afterwards became a Judge of the King's Bench.

He has claim as an author for, in addition to his own epitaph upon this tomb, he edited a folio volume of *Cases decided in the reigns of Henry the Seventh and Henry the Eighth*. He was the first sheriff of Buckinghamshire, when the county was officially severed from Bedfordshire. He built Chilton House in an earlier form than the one which we see to-day. In the next reign it nearly came to be destroyed, as Lipscomb prints

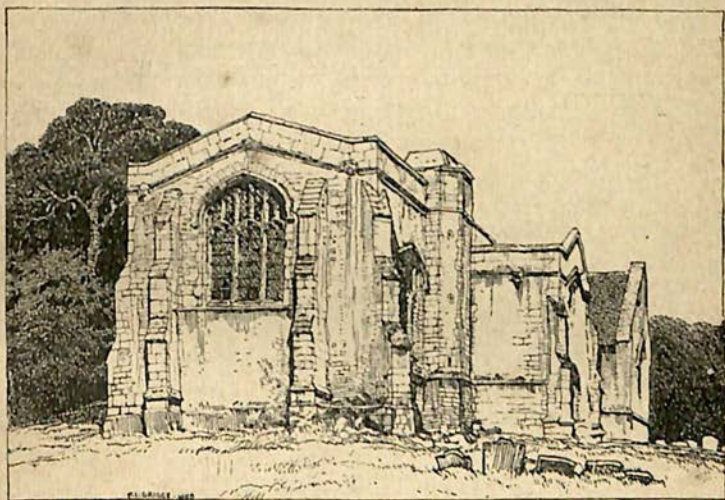


From Long Crendon.

a letter from Prince Rupert to the Governor of Boarstall requesting that he should "demolish, raze, and render it in such a condition that it may not anye wayes be useful to the Enemye." This order was countermanded, and the house remained till 1740, when the then owner, Judge Carter, built the mansion, modelled upon Buckingham Palace, that we see to-day.

Perhaps the most curious thing in Chilton, where there is

much that is pretty to attract, is the statue of a crusader in chain mail, which you may see high up above the roof of the chancel as you stand outside the church. There has been much speculation as to how it got there. One writer has it that it was designed for the founder of the church, who must have flourished in the reign of Edward the Third. Lipscomb, however, thinks that it was placed in this extraordinary position when the tomb of the unknown knight was disturbed for the



Chilton Church.

erection of Sir John Croke's tomb, that is to say about 1611. At this time the south end of the transept was lengthened. Lipscomb's view is supported by the discovery, in 1828, of a stone coffin containing the bones of a man who may very well have been the knight in question. Chilton, by the way, found its derivation from the Celtic word *cyll* or *chilt*, chalk, and brings us, as do the Chiltern Hills, into touch with the pre-Saxon inhabitants of this island.

We continue on this road to Dorton, which is a quite

unimportant village, but narrowly escaped being a Bath or Harrogate, for it has a powerful chalybeate spring, once of some celebrity. Analysis showed that this spring was stronger than that of any other iron spring in the country, and that there is only one spa in Germany superior to it in quality. There is a Manor House, a little village, and a church which is interesting by virtue of its isolation. We follow a long path across the meadow. One is struck by the generations of William Watson that lie in the churchyard, side by side. One William Watson died in 1700, another in 1792, and yet another in 1866. The village is typical of so much in this county as regards population. It had a population of 105 in 1801, and 140 in 1901, being an increase of 35 persons in a century.

You may reach Brill by a two mile walk up-hill through the fields. If you are not inclined for more on this journey you can here return to Thame or to Aylesbury, and leave Brill for another day. The traveller usually approaches Brill by train from Aylesbury, passing Waddesdon Manor Station, where, on a height to the left, may be seen one of the many seats of the Rothschilds. The beautiful house was built by the late Baron Ferdinand Rothschild, and is now occupied by his sister, Miss Alice Rothschild. At Quainton Road one alights from the train and enters upon a few minutes' journey in a steam tram to Brill. A brisk twenty minutes' walk up-hill from the station takes us to the town, a pleasant diversion being found on a pathway to the right across a common, and by an old wooden mill, where one is rewarded by a fine view over Oxfordshire, Oxford being only twelve miles to the right. Brill has the common characteristic of Buckinghamshire towns in its long wide street with diverging roads of lesser pretensions. Nothing picturesque survives of an interesting past. There is not a single reminder that Brill, anciently called Burghill, Brucham, and Brehull, once contained a palace in which Edward the Confessor frequently resided. One of the many miracles performed by that monarch is said to have taken place here.

By the royal touch St. Edward restored the sight of one Wulwyn, who, after having in vain made pilgrimage to eighty-seven churches, found his healing thus. William the Conqueror probably resided at Brill at times, certainly King Stephen did. Henry the Second kept his court here in 1160, and there is a deed signed by him at Brill, to which Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, is an attesting witness. King John held court here in 1205, and we are told kept the Christmas of that year at his palace of Brill. Twenty years later his son Henry the Third was also at Brill. For long years and even centuries after this the manor of Brill was granted by the reigning monarch to this or that noble of his court. The name of one John de Hampden is mentioned, in 1359, and in 1436 the owner of the manor was a Thomas Chaucer. One would like to have identified this name with the son of the poet of the *Canterbury Tales*, and so to have added one more to the many great men of letters in one way or another associated with Buckinghamshire. But there were probably two Geoffrey Chaucers, who were contemporaries, and there were certainly two Thomas Chaucers. Thomas Chaucer, Speaker of the House of Commons, and eldest son of Geoffrey Chaucer, the poet, died in 1434, and could not therefore have been the Thomas who died "seized of this manor, held for one Knight's fee," in 1436. In Queen Elizabeth's reign the Harte family became possessed of Brill manor. They held it to 1715, when it went to the Snell family. The Dormers and the Aubreys held land and houses here up to quite recent times. In 1642 Brill was held for King Charles the First under Sir Gilbert Gerrard, as Governor, and the Parliamentary forces under John Hampden were repulsed. Then is a letter extant, dated 1643, from the Earl of Essex to the Speaker of the House of Commons, in which the General informs him that Prince Rupert is "hourly expected at Brill." A little later the Royalist troops withdrew elsewhere, and Brill disappeared for evermore into obscurity. The visitor of to-day sees no reminder

of departed glory. Even of St. Werburgh's Cell, which tradition places on the north side of Muswell Hill, west of Brill, at the division of the counties of Oxford and Buckinghamshire, there is now no trace, although frequent references to this hermitage are to be found in ancient charters. Brill House, a handsome mansion built in 1770, and long in the possession of the Earls Temple, was taken down in 1828. Of Pym's Charity School, established by the famous patriot, John Pym, "for the instruction of the poor children of this parish" no record remains. The National School, first established in 1815, appears to have been rebuilt. Neither that building nor the Manor House has any significance. Even the church, much restored within the past few years, has little to attract. One of its bells bears the inscription "Richard Chandler made me 1709." The mural tablets are uninteresting. There are no brasses except a brass plate affixed to the wall near the entrance to the chancel. It was probably removed from the floor at one of the many restorations :—

Such as ye are suche were we,
And such as we are such shall yee be,
After the present and wordly lyffe,
Therefore of youre charite
Say a pater/n'r and an ave
For the soules of John Woode and Maude his wife.

Another inscription is on a slab in the pavement :—

Here lyeth the body of Clement Gregory and Anne his wife, the daughter of Richard Wyan, a person truly pious and remarkable for good works. She had only three daughters ; lived widow forty years, and dyed the 31 of January, 1717, in the 88th year of her age.

From Brill a journey of less than two miles brings us to Boarstall when we are but twelve miles from Oxford. Boarstall was included in Brill at the Domesday Survey. Its story is a romantic one. It appears in legend and it made history during the Civil War, as will be found recorded in the pages of Clarendon. Its legend accounts for its name. One

Nigel, a forester in the reign of Edward the Confessor, slew a wild boar which was the terror of the forest and received from the King a grant of land and the custody of the forest of Bernwode. Nigel, we are told, built on his land a mansion called Borestalle in memory of the slain boar. Lipscomb suggests a more prosaic origin. "Stalle" is Saxon for stable and perhaps the King when residing at Burgh or Brill had his stables here. Boarstall House was garrisoned for Charles the First. Lipscomb gives a plate of it showing a truly magnificent palace, laid out with picturesque regularity, and Browne Willis calls it "a noble seat.. Nothing remains of it to-day but the gateway with turrets and some stables now incorporated in a modern farmhouse. Boarstall was twice besieged by Fairfax for the Parliamentary Army and was taken on the second occasion. Clarendon says that it did much good service

not only in defending Oxford from mischievous incursions, but did very near support itself by the contributions it drew from Bucks, besides the prey it frequently took from the neighbourhood of Aylesbury.

One can but think, as one stands by the ancient gateway, of Sir Thomas Fairfax's quaint letter to Sir William Campion dated May 12th, 1646.

Sir: I doe by these summon you to deliver uppe Borstall House into my hands for ye use of Parliamēt; you may have favourable termes for yourself and all within your garrison, if you reasonably accept thereof. I desire your answer this day.

Campion begged for time to ask the King and he ultimately capitulated. He was killed in 1648 at the siege of Colchester.

The fragment of Boarstall that remains is (1910) in the custody of courteous people who acting under the instructions of the Lord of the Manor readily give admission to the wayfarer. And Boarstall even to-day is well worth a visit. We are taken into the banqueting chamber, a fine room in which we see a portrait of Charles the First and the arms of the Aubreys, a family which so long held sway in this region: we are shown the moat at the end of the meadow which still flows round

three sides of the domain indicating the extent of the gardens that we see in Lipscomb's fine plate. In one room this plate is to be seen framed on the wall, as is also an engraving of the Boarstall horn and glass from the same book. We are taken to the turret where there is a fine view and also a well-toned bell formerly connected with the clock and bearing the inscription "Richard Keene made me 1661." It is little enough that remains of a once beautiful mansion. In the churchyard of Boarstall there is a very fine specimen of the old churchyard crosses. In the church there is a tomb to one Francis Tilsy who died in 1701 with the inscription

Earth take my earth, Satan my sin. I leave
The world my substance, Heav'n my soul receive.

Many will prefer the inscription on the tomb of Sir John Aubrey "whose union with two women of such rare excellence he regarded as the choicest blessing of Providence and the peculiar felicity of a long life." Mary and Martha were the appropriate names of these excellent women. This was the first baronet, who died in 1726. It was Sir John Aubrey, the sixth baronet, who pulled down Boarstall House. This Aubrey had a seat in the House of Commons for thirteen Parliaments, representing Aylesbury in one Parliament and the county of Buckingham in another. He rebuilt Boarstall Church in 1818 and died in 1826.

From Boarstall it is a pleasant drive that skirts Boarstall Woods and Shabbington Wood to Worminghall, Ickford and Shabbington. Two bishops were born at Worminghall, the first of these little villages. Dr. John King, who became Bishop of London, and his son, Dr. Henry King, who became Bishop of Chichester. The father of John was Philip King of Worminghall. John was one of Queen Elizabeth's chaplains. James the First made him Bishop of London. He died in 1621 and was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral. "A solid and a sound divine" is a contemporary description of him.

His son, Henry King, died in 1669. It having been said that his father had died a Roman Catholic, Henry, now Rector of Fulham, preached a sermon at St. Paul's Cross repudiating the suggestion. In 1639 he was made Dean of Rochester, and in 1641 Bishop of Chichester. With the Civil War and the triumph of the Parliament he suffered for his opinions, spending some years at Langley in this county, at the house of his brother-in-law Sir Richard Hobart. Here he published, "from my sad retirement," an elegy on Charles the First, and this and others of his poems were many times reprinted.

Worminghall church has but little interest. It was partly rebuilt in 1847. Its most interesting memorial is a brass plate on the wall of the chancel to Philip King, his wife and twelve children, all of whom are presented kneeling. This Philip King was, as we have seen, the father of one bishop and the grandfather of another. He died in 1592 and the rhymed inscription upon the brass tablet begins as follows :

"The aged root, that 12 times fruit did bear,
(" Though first and last were blasted in their prime)
" Is withered now——"

The Kings are also commemorated on the front of the almshouses that you will find in the village. Here we may read the inscription :—

To God and the Poore. John King, Esq., sonn of Henry King, Bishop of Chichester, and grandson of John King, Lord Bishop of London, and Anne his wife, daughter of Sir William Russell of Strensum, Baronett, dedicates this Foundation for six Poore single men and four women.

Anno Dni, 1675.

Before leaving the churchyard you will note on either side of the door of the porch two sculptured heads, one of Queen Victoria, the other of Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford.

Next we come to Ickford, where we are four miles from Thame. This is supposed to have been the place at which Edward the Elder made a treaty with the Danes in 907.

Among past rectors of Ickford who have particular interest were Calybutte Downing and Gilbert Sheldon. Downing became rector of this village in 1632, and in 1636 he appears to have changed with Sheldon for the vicarage of Hackney. Ten years earlier the two men had been rivals for the vacant wardenship of All Souls' College, Oxford, Sheldon receiving the office. In later life their ways parted. Downing resigned the vicarage of Hackney, and became more and more of a Puritan. He died in 1644. We may meet with his name again in our rambles through Buckinghamshire, for he was for a time curate of Quainton.

Gilbert Sheldon, who was born in 1598 and died in 1677, attained to much more fame. He was a violent anti-Puritan and took part in all the struggles between Parliament and the Church prior to the Civil War. With the restoration of Charles the Second he was made Bishop of London, succeeding Juxon, who, it will be remembered, was with Charles the First on the scaffold, and in 1663 he was made Archbishop of Canterbury, again in succession to Juxon, who died in that year. Sheldon is known to us all by the fact that he built the Sheldonian Theatre at Oxford, and he greatly assisted in the rebuilding of St. Paul's Cathedral. I am afraid we may not associate the pleasant rectory exactly opposite the church with either Downing or Sheldon, but it is, as an old county history calls it, "a genteel residence." The most interesting monument in Ickford church, and indeed the only one of importance, is that erected by Thomas Tipping in 1595 to himself, his nine children: four sons and five daughters, and to his "chaste wife." All the figures are in relief and in a state of complete preservation. It is a little startling to discover so perfectly preserved a tomb after a lapse of 300 years.

A little over a mile's walk from Ickford and we are at Shabbington. The church here is absolutely without a memorial of any kind, but one William Burnand, "dairyman," has secured for himself lasting fame by the statement

conspicuously displayed across the whole length of the church that in 1828 he bequeathed £100 to the poor of the parish. One sees in the churchyard at the chancel end no fewer than sixteen gravestones inscribed with the name of "Parsons" and certain other tombs of the same family have become undecipherable.

From Boarstall we could with equal ease have reached Worminghall by a road through Oakley which may be visited direct from Boarstall. In this case we do not pass by Shabbington Wood. The Empress Matilda is so slightly recognised a personality in English history that one is a little surprised that in 1142 she granted Oakley Church with its Chapels of Brill, Boarstall, and Adingrave to the monks of St. Frideswide's in Oxford. Cardinal Wolsey possessed the endowment for a time. The church as we see it to-day is uninteresting. Part of the building was nearly destroyed at one time by the exceptional growth of ivy on its walls. The only interesting tombs are those in a side chapel now used as a vestry. These are the tombs of the Tyrrell family, one of whom, Sir Timothy, was son of the Master of the Buckhounds to Charles the First. Sir Timothy, who died in 1701, married a daughter of the famous Archbishop Usher of chronology fame. Their son James also has a marble tablet on this wall. He died in 1718. "No man," we are told on his inscription, "was ever more happy in all his domestick affairs or deserved it better. He was blessed with a prudent wife and goodly issue." Oakley, however, deserves commendation in this day by being one of the few villages, in common with the Claydons, that aspires to a Free Library. At a crowded meeting it recently voted for this excellent institution.

CHAPTER VI

QUARRENDON AND QUANTON.

THE old Roman road called Akeman Street runs from Tring through Aylesbury to Bicester. You will find an Akeman Street Station where an arch crosses the road about a mile past Waddesdon. It belongs to the new branch of the Great Central Railway. We find ourselves in the rich pasture lands that doubtless inspired the lines in Drayton's *Polyolbion* :—

Aylesbury vale that walloweth in her wealth
And (by her wholesome air continually in health)
Is lusty, firm and fat ; and holds her youthful strength !

From Aylesbury a mile or more of walking takes us to the ruined chapel of Quarrendon. It stands in a field and can be approached from the Bicester or from the Buckingham Road. The former is the better route, although there is only a cart-track. By the Buckingham Road you are fully two miles from Aylesbury before you turn down a grassy track on your left, and passing through some gates across a field come to a meadow where you see the ruin in front of you. You walk with much discomfort across this meadow, where there is no foot-path, and then you come on to the cart-track from the Bicester Road, and the ruin is here on your left.

One of the earliest incidents in the history of Quarrendon, in modern times, is that of a flood about 1570, when three thousand sheep and other cattle belonging to Sir Henry Lee were drowned. This Lee was Champion to Queen Elizabeth, and a great figure at her Court. When he resigned his

Championship in old age, the Queen visited him here at Quarrendon, and he gave her "gorgeous entertainment," and a splendid masque was performed, which recalls Sir Walter Scott's account of the revels of Kenilworth. The Masque of Quarrendon, in 1590, is described in very great detail by contemporary writers. They say that in 1559, that is, on the first anniversary of the accession of the Queen to the Throne, Sir Henry made a vow of chivalry that he would annually on the return of that auspicious day present himself in the tilt-yard, in honour of the Queen, to maintain her beauty, worth, and dignity against all comers, unless prevented by age, infirmity, or other accident. On the 17th November each year after this a great tourney took place at Quarrendon until 1590, when Sir Henry Lee, feeling himself overtaken by age, resigned his office of the Queen's Knight to the Earl of Cumberland. But the glories of Quarrendon have departed even more than those of Kenilworth. Not a vestige of the mansion remains, only the fragment of the chapel surrounded by iron palings—three Gothic arches, three windows, and a few loose columns—a poor survival of so much glory and grandeur. Scott, however, has immortalised both Kenilworth and Quarrendon; for he doubtless had Sir Henry Lee of Quarrendon, the Queen's champion, in mind, when he described Sir Harry Lee in *Woodstock*.

Scott, with the legitimate licence of a novelist, has mixed up the "loyal Lee" of Quarrendon with the later Lees of the Restoration period, who, curiously enough, had puritanical tendencies. There is, says Lady Verney in the *Verney Memoirs*:

"a picture of Sir Henry Lee in his eightieth year, with his hand on the head of a great dog, and the motto 'more faithful than favoured,' now at Ditchley, painted by Cornelius Jansen, to which Sir Walter was evidently alluding, in the last scene of the story."

There is a railing round this Quarrendon ruin. We wish that it had been placed there earlier. The chapel was so far perfect in 1746 that a marriage took place there in

that year. But Lipscomb described it in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1817, and complained of its dilapidated condition, and the mutilation of its monuments. The whole place, at that time, was strewn with fragments of monumental statues, cornices, and marbles. In the chancel there was to be seen the remains of a magnificent Sarcophagus, on which was the recumbent effigy of a Knight of the Garter, in alabaster, and a lengthy inscription recording the achievements of Sir Henry Lee, who died in 1611. These fragments were in existence up to 1830.¹ Mr. J. K. Fowler, who remembered the chapel when the tombs were there, tells us in his *Recollections* that in his day when a farmer wanted a gatepost, a beam, or a stone for a wall, he helped himself from the ruins, and one man in Aylesbury did a good business in marble candlesticks, and when he had an order went to Quarrendon and broke off an arm or a leg from one of the Lee monuments and carried it away with him. To-day, all has disappeared, save two or three arches and a few pieces of masonry. Not a fragment of the romance of Sir Henry's life is in evidence—his love for Anne Vavasour, one of Queen Elizabeth's Maids of Honour, who, although very young and beautiful, created "much scandal" among the courtiers on account of her attachment to the old gallant, Sir Henry Lee. She refused a number of young lovers for this "ancient relic of the age of chivalry," as Agnes Strickland calls Sir Henry. Why they did not marry is not told, but there was a couplet current here long ago :

Here lyes the old Knt. good Sir Harry
By her he lov'd, but ne'er would marry.

¹ "I well remember, only in 1828, examining the monument of Sir Henry Lee, reposing in blazoned armour, with the insignia of the garter. Near him, the recumbent figures of his father, Sir Anthony Lee, and his Lady Margaret. . . . But neither sentiment nor taste were at hand to prevent wanton mischief and desecration ; the chapel cross was even taken off, the area was used as a cow-pen, and the whole was strewn with fragments of sculptured marble and alabaster. It was not, therefore, surprising in June, 1842, to find the destruction so far completed, that the monuments had disappeared."—Smyth's *Antes Hartwelliana*.

To her, Sir Henry erected a marble monument, with the inscription :—

Under this stone entombed lies a fair and worthy Dame,
Daughter to Henry Vavasour Anne Vavasour her name.
She living with Sir Henry Lee, for love long time did dwell,
Death could not part them, but here they rest within one cell.

It is said that the desecration and destruction of the beautiful chapel originated with the disposition on the part of scandalised neighbours to protest against this union, un-sanctioned by the Church. A mile from Quarrendon we reach Fleet Marston, which contains two farmhouses and a church. This church was restored in 1869.

We next reach Waddesdon, the Manor of which we have already seen in the distance, when on the way to Upper Winchendon. Lace-making once prevailed at Waddesdon. Now the whole of the village is dominated by the Manor House of one of the Rothschilds, as in an earlier age of the Courtneys, the Goodwyns, the Whartons, and the Churchills, to whom it successively belonged. The present house was built in 1880 by the late Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild, on land which thirty years ago was a wild common, and around it have grown up many pretty model cottages. This, indeed, is one of the several model villages of the county. The very inn is delightfully attractive. The church, which we approach through a lych-gate and by a pleasant avenue, has interesting brasses, one in particular to Hugh Bristowe, rector, in 1548, who is seen in his shroud. One sees his ribs uncovered in a painfully realistic manner. His effigy has an inscription, which commences :—

Some time I was persone here
Of this churche at Wadsdon
Above the space of fforty yere
Elect unto the ffirst Porcyon
A thowsand ffyve hundredth forty and ayght.

There is an interesting monument, dated 1330, of an armed knight who once had a dog, or as the local gossip had it, a lion

at his feet. But dog or lion has disappeared. A stone in the wall of the porch records that

Sir Roger Denham, Kt. Died 1490, found at Eythorpe, Aug. 24, 1887.
Re-interred by Alice de Rothschild.

— Ashendon is eight miles from Aylesbury. Lipscomb declares it to be the Essedene of Alfred the Great's battle with the Danes in 872, and right gladly would we associate our county with the most heroic and picturesque figure in the early history of our island. Dr. Freeman, however, places this battle at Ashdown in Wessex. But certainly the Danes committed great depredations here in the tenth century. In the fourteenth century Ashendon was held by Richard Earle of Arundel, whose execution for high treason took place in 1397, and whose death was accompanied by the additional scandal and tragedy that his son-in-law, Thomas Mowbray, Earl Marshal of England, assisted in binding up his eyes. The church is delightfully situated on a hill. It is evidently old, and has not been "churchwardenised," to use a favourite word for "restoration" that I find in an old county history. We note the squire's high pew, and the battered figure of a knight in armour, near the altar, which has been whitewashed with the rest of the church. There has been much speculation as to the knight's identity. It has been assigned to one of the family of Cressy, ancient Lords here. We shall never know. There were formerly many brasses in this church, but all have gone. The theft of brasses in the past might half excuse the locking-up of churches, so common in this county, and so irritating to the traveller, did we not know that many were disposed of by the vicars. The guide-books make very little of Ashendon—one of them does not mention the place—but its elevated structure, the cluster of thatched cottages, and the time-worn church, make it worth a visit.

From Ashendon we continue our journey to Wotton Underwood, which lies on the edge of Wotton Park, which

we must skirt to reach Ludgershall, whence we pass to Grendon Underwood, and Quainton, in order to conclude our day's journey. Wotton Park belongs to the Temple family. It was rebuilt in 1820. There is an elm tree avenue a mile in length. The church—over-much restored—contains a chapel with tombs of the Grenvilles, particularly brass effigies of Edward Grenville who died in 1585, his wife, Alice, and their infant son. There is a monument in the nave to the third Duke of Buckingham, who died in 1889, and is buried here. As Earl Temple he sat for Buckinghamshire from 1846 to 1857, and he held office without much distinction in more than one Ministry. He was the last Duke of his title, which must not be confounded with the Earldom of Buckinghamshire. The story of the Grenvilles belongs more to Stowe than to Wotton, which, after Stowe had come into the family, was usually occupied as a sort of dower house or given over to younger sons. The last Duke was succeeded in his Earldom of Temple by his nephew, and Wotton House belongs still to that interesting race.

From Wotton Underwood we have got to go round Wotton Park for two miles to Ludgershall, which has associations with another great man, for John Wycliff was rector here in 1368. An earlier claim for it is one that insists that its name was inspired by King Lud, to whom tradition ascribes a palace at Brill, two miles away. Another tradition assigns "Fair Rosamund" a bower in this district, hence the name of Kingswood for the adjoining hamlet. In old maps, a lane between the woods was certainly called "Rosiman's Waye."

John Wycliff was successively rector of Ludgershall and Lutterworth, but his long sojourn at Lutterworth in Leicestershire has quite eclipsed the memory of his pastorate of the Church of Ludgershall. Wycliff was born in Yorkshire, tradition says in 1324. He would seem to have been Master of Balliol, then Vicar of Fillingham, and

then, in 1368, Rector of Ludgershall, where his name is finally entered as follows :—

John de Wycliff, 12 Nov., 1368, on the presentation of John Pawley, Prior of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in England ; and continued Rector until 1390 or later.

In any case, there is no record of another rector until 1418, but Wycliff's biographers usually fix him at Lutterworth in 1372, before his great struggle for Church reform commences. By 1388 the whole Bible had been translated into English by Wycliff and his friends, for we may call it a "translation" even if we accept the theory that it was merely a vernacular rendering of a book already widely circulated in pre-Reformation days. We like to think, as we sit in Ludgershall church, that if the work was done at Lutterworth, it was here, in these surroundings, that the first dreams of such an achievement germinated. A few straggling cottages; a simple inn, and a much-restored church, are all that we see to-day. There is absolutely no information to assist us to picture Wycliff as he officiated at Mass, in this spot, more than five centuries ago. The suggestion, however, that he was non-resident is not supported by much evidence.

The only interesting tomb, indeed, is of two centuries later. This is a raised slab in the chancel, upon which are five brasses. Three of them are effigies, one is an inscription, and one is a coat of arms. The inscription says that "Anne Englishe lies here." She died in 1565, aged 95. Her husband, Michel Englishe, was Sheriff of London. The other effigies are of yet another Anne Englishe, and of her daughter, Anne Neele, aged four. At the beginning of the seventeenth century there were old family pews in Ludgershall church. Now its interest is confined to the eight quaint heads sculptured in the roof, and the decoration of some of the pillars, which has clearly survived the many restorations. Under the tower William Spiers has a huge monument, dated 1814. From the exterior, one notes the

clumsy architectural effect of nave and chancel of different periods.

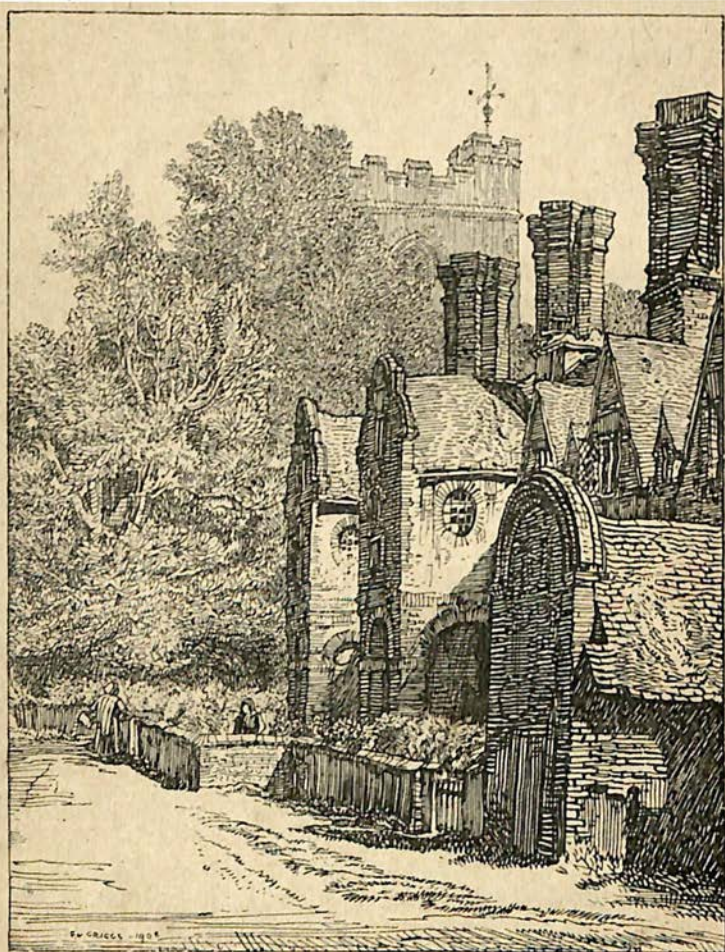
At Ludgershall, opposite the church, there is a signpost, and the three roads lead (1) to Wotton and Aylesbury, (2) to Brill and Thame, (3) to Bicester and Buckingham. If you take the third of these routes you will come on to the Bicester Road, and turning to the right you will find the turning to Grendon Underwood and Edgcott on your left: Grendon Underwood, derived from green don, or hill, is associated with an uncomplimentary distich:—

Grendon Underwood—The dirtiest town that ever stood,

due to the deep and miry state of the roads, in days when it was a thoroughfare into Oxfordshire. With an old house, once "The Ship Inn," in this village, there is a tradition that Shakspeare passed at least one night there, when journeying from Stratford-on-Avon to London, and Aubrey is responsible for the statement, probably mythical enough, that "Shakspeare picked up some of the humour in his *Midsummer Night's Dream* from the constable of the place whilst passing a night at Grendon." Sheahan tells a more circumstantial story of the poet being found asleep in the porch of Grendon Underwood church—the church has now no porch—by two parish constables, who used him roughly, and whom he afterwards immortalised as Dogberry and Verges in his play *Much Ado About Nothing*. Tradition even assigns Shakspeare a room in this inn, which contains an arched fireplace of stone. An old sign board of the "Ship," supposed to be contemporary with Shakspeare, is preserved among the treasures of the Bucks Archæological Society. The church contains monuments to the family of Lord Saye and Sele.

We pass now to Edgcott, a village that has no history, and thence to Quainton, which has an interesting one. Quainton has, for example, the remains of an old stone cross. Tradition, says Lipscomb, has it that the dedication of the church was to the Holy Cross, and that this erection, being similar to

many others, set up by the Knights' Hospitallers in places belonging to their Order, seems to support that notion.



Almshouses at Quinton.

The church is rich in monuments, particularly in the Winwood Chapel in the chancel. There is one to Richard Winwood, a

knight in armour, with his wife; there is one to Robert Dormer, who was a judge, and is shown in his ermine robes. The judge died in 1726 of grief for the death of his only son, who is represented on the tomb. An earlier Dormer also lies in the chancel—Fleetwood Dormer, who died in 1696. Two of the many monuments have literary and historical associations. The one is to Sir Richard Winwood, who was secretary to Charles the First, and the other to Richard Brett, who was one of the translators of the Bible of 1610. He was Rector of Quainton from 1595 to 1637. It was another Richard Winwood, son of Sir Ralph Winwood, who endowed the almshouses near the church, having erected them in 1687 “for three poor men, widowers, to be called brothers, and three poor women, widows, to be called sisters.” In the churchyard are the graves of James Lipscomb, the father of the principal historian of our county, and his wife. James Lipscomb was a surgeon at Quainton, when his son, George Lipscomb, to whom every writer on Buckinghamshire owes so much, was born here. James had, however, been in the Royal Navy earlier in life, and according to the inscription on his gravestone, had “served in several memorable engagements.” Leaving Quainton, it is a mile’s journey to Quainton Road Station on the Great Central Railway, which will take us either to Aylesbury or to London.

CHAPTER VII

THE CLAYDONS AND THE VERNEY FAMILY

WHILE we are at Quainton it is quite convenient to drive through that pleasant quartet of villages known as the Claydons, with which is associated also the village of Hillesden. They can be reached also from Calvert on the Great Central line, or there is a railway station on the London and North Western at Claydon itself within sight of Steeple Claydon church. No spot in all England will more vividly appeal to our historical sense than this little circle of villages, if, perchance, we have read the four volumes of the *Verney Memoirs* that we owe to the present Lady Verney and to her predecessor, the second wife of the late Sir Harry Verney, who was a sister of Miss Florence Nightingale. In this book the life of the seventeenth century is epitomised for us in a marvellous manner. We see the distractions caused by Civil War, the breaking up of families into rival camps, and the heroic deeds done on both sides. We see family life in its calmer and more peaceful aspects. We are introduced to the love-making of the young people, to their anxieties over household matters, and even to the distractions which the servant question gave in the seventeenth century as in our own. In approaching the Claydons we decline to be interested as Lipscomb, our favourite county historian, would have us become, in the Mandevilles, the

De Burghs, the Gresleys, and the Zouches, who held these lands in earlier times. We can scarcely find it in our hearts to be interested in the Giffards, who had a lease for a hundred years of Middle Claydon Manor House and estates, which only terminated when Sir Edmund Verney comes upon the scene. Some of the Giffards have perpetuated themselves in brass in Middle Claydon Church, but it is with Sir Edmund Verney, the Standard Bearer to Charles the First, and his sons, Sir Ralph and Sir John, and his grandson—another luckless Edmund—that we are most inclined to concern ourselves, for the reason that the *Verney Memoirs* have made these people of the past like very dear friends of the present, whose joys and sorrows we have shared.

If we alight at Claydon station we shall walk first to the village and church of Steeple Claydon, which is the largest of the four villages. William the Conqueror granted Steeple Claydon to his niece, Judith, Countess of Huntingdon. The Chaloners held the manor in Stuart times, and Sir Thomas Chaloner and his neighbour, Sir Edmund Verney, were both courtiers in the reign of the first James and the first Charles, Sir Thomas being tutor to James's son Henry. Sir Thomas's son, however—another Thomas—was a hot Parliamentarian, and sat as one of Charles's judges. He had to forfeit his estate at the Restoration in consequence and died in exile. He did, however, leave something by which to be remembered in his native village, that is to say, an endowment of £12 a year for school purposes. This endowment survives to this day, and has been wisely devoted, by the inhabitants of East Claydon, to the soundest educational use. East Claydon has a solid building which bears the title of the Chaloner Free Library. The Claydons, indeed, were probably the first villages in England to adopt the Public Libraries Act. There is one at Middle Claydon, and a third at East Claydon, and all three are marvellously successful. The villagers take the greatest interest in the books; other villages in the county

are striving to emulate them, and as we have hinted there will shortly be another Free Library at Oakley, a little village near Brill.

Of the church at Steeple Claydon we may almost say as Lipscomb said of it seventy years ago, that, "it contains neither painted glass, monuments, nor inscriptions deserving particular notice." The only thing that has been added since then is a graceful tablet containing profile portraits in marble of Sir Harry Verney and his wife. It is a five mile drive from Steeple Claydon to Hillesden, but in the summer there is a field walk of a little more than a mile to the church which we see on the hill in the distance. With Hillesden we begin our association with the Verney family, for Sir Edmund Verney took for himself to wife Margaret, a daughter of Sir Thomas Denton, of Hillesden House. Margaret's brother, Sir Alexander Denton, held Hillesden House against Cromwell's soldiers in the Civil War. Sir Alexander and Sir Edmund were almost the only prominent land-owners of Buckinghamshire who stood for King Charles in the struggle. On the other side were Sir Edmund's son Ralph, Sir Miles Hobart, Member of Parliament for Marlow, Sir Edward Coke, the great lawyer who lived, as we shall see, at Stoke Poges, Sir Peter Temple of Stowe, who was Lady Verney's uncle, Bulstrode Whitlocke, Fortescue of Saldon, and lastly the great John Hampden. We shall come across all these names as our story proceeds. Hampden's house was seventeen miles from Claydon. Sir Peter Temple was a nearer neighbour.

This is a digression from our account of Hillesden except that it is necessary to remind the reader of the great union, as well as disunion, of families during the Civil War. Sir Alexander Denton, for example, was married to Mary Hampden, a cousin of the patriot. This did not save his fine house from being burnt down and all its treasures destroyed by the Parliamentary Army. It was a memorable siege. A thousand labourers

were employed in making trenches round the house and church. The church was taken first, and the old oak door shows the bullet holes to this day. When the house was captured all the prisoners, including Sir Alexander Denton, were marched to Padbury, three miles away, and thence to Newport Pagnell. The house was set on fire and burned to the ground. Two romances relieve the story of disaster. Sir Alexander Denton's sister and daughter were both wooed by officers of the besieging force, and the sister—Susan Denton—actually married one Jaconiah Abercrombie. But Captain Abercrombie, the roundhead lover and husband, was killed at Boarstall in the following year, and thus the Puritan found burial among the cavaliers in Hillesden Church. Hillesden House was rebuilt in 1648, but the "new", house has now disappeared, and Hillesden Church to-day stands alone. Returning from Hillesden to Steeple Claydon, we cross the railway-line, and a mile's journey will take us to Middle Claydon, where the hall and church are close together. There is a priest's door in the grounds of Claydon House by which the family and visitors may enter the church. We pause here to recall the story of this historic manor. We are told that Middle Claydon came at the Conquest into the hands of William the Norman's illegitimate son Peverell, who founded the church of St. Martin-le-Grand in London. William Peverell died in 1113. There were many owners before, in 1434, the estates passed to Sir Ralph Verney, an alderman of London, although earlier Verneys may have had associations with the place. William de Verney, who died in 1367, had estates in Ivinghoe and Swanbourne, and his son, John de Verney of Fleet Marston, has a brass in Middle Claydon Church, dated 1378. But as we are distinctly told that Sir Ralph Verney purchased the estates in 1434, we may assume that it was he who placed memorials to four earlier generations of his family in the church. Sir Ralph, who had been M.P. for London, was buried there, and he does not lie with his

ancestors and descendants. His grandson, another Sir Ralph, was chamberlain to the Princess Mary in Henry the Eighth's reign. Then there came a third Sir Ralph and his successor Sir Edmund, before we reach *the* Sir Edmund Verney whose life story, with that of his son, makes up the four volumes that we prize so highly. It is of Sir Edmund Verney, who was standard-bearer to Charles the First and died at the battle of Edgehill, and his son, Sir Ralph Verney, who served in Parliament under Cromwell, Charles the Second, James the Second, and William the Third, that we think of at Claydon, of them and their family, each separate member of which interests us exceedingly. Have we not read their love-letters and been with them alike in joy and sorrow, as we have already said, from childhood to the grave? There are few people moving around us in our own day whom we know as well as we know these Verneys of Claydon, thanks to the breaking open of muniment chests and the judicious selection of the documents contained therein. The well-proportioned house, however, was not quite the same, it may be, in the days of Sir Edmund and Sir Ralph. The house is supposed to have been built in the reign of Henry the Eighth, of course in the "H" shape; in Elizabeth's reign it took the "E" shape, and it has had many changes since then. Sir Ralph's brother John altered it, and his son almost entirely rebuilt the structure, and so but little of the spaciousness that we see to-day was familiar to the Cavaliers. The famous Adam brothers assisted in the transformation, and Italian artists were employed upon the rooms, the fine proportions of which led Lord Houghton—a very little man—when dining at Claydon House to remark genially: "I like a room where one feels one can stand upright." But the Verney who built these Adam rooms suffered for his extravagance and came to poverty in later life. His niece succeeded to the estate, and she in her turn bequeathed it in 1810 to her half-sister Catherine Wright, and it next came to her heir, Sir Harry Calvert, the second baronet of his house, who took the name of Verney, so that the Verneys of Claydon that we know to-day are in no way related

to Sir Edmund and Sir Ralph concerning whom one member of the family, the present Lady Verney, has taught us so much that is interesting. The primary interest of the house is its fine collection of portraits, made familiar to us by admirable reproductions in the *Verney Memoirs*. There is also a priests' hole, one of the six associated with this county, the others being at Burnham Abbey, Dinton Hall, Gayhurst, Upton Court, Slough, and Stoke Poges Manor House. The secret of this room, Lady Verney tells us, had been quite forgotten, and it was revealed when repairs were going on about 1862. The house also long boasted a ghost—that of Sir Edmund Verney, who refused to give up the standard of his King at Edgehill, although the Parliamentary soldiers offered him life. He died clutching it; his body was never found, but the hand, it is supposed, was recovered, recognised by the ring with the portrait of Charles in it. This ring is still in the possession of the family. The knight's ghost was many times seen—by the imaginative—at Claydon House searching for that lost hand, but after the place was so strangely changed by Earl Verney Sir Edmund ceased to haunt it.

The church at Middle Claydon stands, as we have described, very near the house. The chancel was built during the hundred years' lease of the estate by the Verneys to the Giffards, and the names of Roger Giffard and Maria his wife are inscribed over the door with the date 1519. There are brasses to Roger and Maria in the church. Near the altar is a monument of which the inscription commences "I, Urian Verney Esquire the sixth of seven sonnes and two daughters of Sir Ralfe Verney Knight at his death made this monument for my selfe and my wife Lettice." It is dated 1608. There is a fine monument in the chancel to the hero of Edgehill and his son. The son, Sir Ralph, had this designed in Rome. There are four busts, one of Sir Edmund and his wife Margaret are above, while Sir Ralph's bust is below with Mary, his wife.

Let it not be assumed that the standard-bearer lies here.

Concerning him there is a tradition that he was "neither born nor buried." Certainly his birth is not traceable in the Verney annals, and his body, as we know, was never found. In 1639 he had made his will directing his body "shall be interred in ye chancel of the Parish Church of Middle Claydon, with as little pomp and charges as my executor conveniently may." But this was not to be. Two years later, while Sir Edmund was away in the Scotch War, Lady Verney died. You have seen her bust in the church. Her son Ralph, the Parliament man, buried her, in the interval of taking those "Notes" in Parliament which have served for all the historians of the great crisis as invaluable documents, and a year later the standard of Civil War was raised and Edgehill was lost and won.

In 1649 when Cromwell was in Ireland and Sir Ralph Verney in exile, a further tragedy occurred in the Verney family. Sir Ralph's brother and the third son of the standard-bearer, another Edmund, was slain near Drogheda soon after the massacre. The siege of Drogheda is a part of familiar history, although few Irishmen know how much English blood was spilt there, and still fewer can be expected to grasp Cromwell's point of view in that ruthless massacre. There is, however, no meaning in the statement that we find in some of the guide-books that young Verney was "treacherously slain." We know that, after the siege, he was "enticed from the presence of Cromwell by a certain Roper, who then 'ran him through with a trick,'"¹ but we do not know the details.

Sir Ralph was an exile at Blois when the King was executed. Here in the following year he lost his wife, Mary, whose body he arranged to have conveyed to England and buried in Middle Claydon Church. The Restoration brought Sir Ralph Verney home again, and he was soon in the House of Commons once more. We have a stirring account of his successful fight for Buckingham in Charles the Second's Parliament of 1680, when,

¹ Gardiner's *History of the Commonwealth*, Vol. I., 136.

with his cousin, Sir Richard Temple, of Stowe, he was successfully elected. At home we follow him with equal interest, and admire his treatment of family affairs. His two sons can alone be mentioned here. Edmund, the elder boy, married, as we shall see, a wife from East Claydon, and he died, as did his two children, before Sir Ralph. Sir Ralph lived to approve of William of Orange's landing. The second son, John, succeeded his father in 1796, and we follow his career also with interest. He had taken up commerce, and had been successful as a member of a trading firm. He was three times married; but we are most interested in Elizabeth Palmer, the first wife, who married at seventeen, had four children, and died before she was twenty-two. Her charming portrait looks down upon us from the walls of Claydon. John became Viscount Fermanagh, and his son, Ralph, became the first Earl Verney in 1742. The second Earl Verney was the extravagant, eccentric peer, who built the great staircase, and enlarged and changed Claydon House, dying well-nigh a pauper and childless. The most important event in the history of the Claydon family after Sir Ralph had been gathered to his fathers was the famous contest of 1784, when Lord Verney, Sir John Aubrey, and Thomas Grenville were the candidates. Verney lost by twenty-four votes, which he would not have done had not a partisan in mistaken zeal voted after the poll was supposed to be closed, and thus kept the poll open another hour and enabled the enemy to bring up other voters—a situation inexplicable in our day, when we have not fourteen days' polling for one constituency. We may meet Lord Verney ten years earlier when Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale are on a tour in Wales, and, passing through Beaconsfield, are received "with open arms" by Burke, who, however, has "to go somewhere about election matters." It is thus that Mrs. Thrale records the incident in the *Diary* that has recently been published—an interesting glimpse of the times:—

Lord Verney and Edmund Burke came home at night very much

flustered with liquor, and I thought how I had spent three months from home among dunces of all ranks and sorts, but had never seen a man drunk till I came among the Wits.¹

Lord Verney was described by Burke as "an indulgent, humane, and moderate landlord, a great protector of the poor within his reach," and it was he who helped Burke to his seat at Wendover, and started the great Irishman on his Parliamentary career in 1765. Lady Verney tells us that "the magnificence of his operations in electioneering and in building brought him at last to bankruptcy." After the contents of the house had been sold he returned to it, it is said, and lived penuriously for a time in a single room. His niece and successor pulled down much of the house, so that the building as we see it to-day is neither the Elizabethan structure nor the Adam structure, but fragments of both. None the less interesting are the portraits in the house, one of which is Vandyk's Sir Edmund Verney, another is the same great painter's Charles the First—given by the King—which is to be found in replica in the Dresden Galleries. There also are Sir Ralph and his wife Mary, also by Vandyk, and that younger Edmund whose story is associated with East Claydon. We are reluctant to tear ourselves away from the pictures at Claydon House, or from the fine Adam staircase with its wrought-iron balustrade representing standing-corn, which bends and rustles as you ascend. There is a fantastic Chinese-room with decoration that throws doubt upon the taste of the second Earl Verney. In an older wing of the house we see the rooms occupied by Miss Florence Nightingale, when her sister, Lady Verney, reigned over Claydon. There is a portrait of Sir Ralph Verney as a youth, by Cornelius Jansen, who also painted the youthful Milton.

East Claydon, two miles away, has an interesting church and a beautiful manor-house—the "White House"—which dates from 1675. The manor belonged to the Abell family for

¹ *Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale*, by A. M. Bradley. 1909.

a period, and then to the Verneys, through the marriage in 1662 of Edmund Verney, Sir Ralph's elder son, to Mary Abell, the heiress of the White House. The pair survive for us by an inscription over the village inn with the initials V. E. M. and the date 1675. Unhappily, under their rule, the White House, now a farm-house, had its share of tragedy. The wife became insane. Edmund Verney died before his father, Sir Ralph. So also did his two children. This Mary Verney's father, who "dyed High Sherife of this county" in 1661, is buried in East Claydon Church. Bottle Claydon as Lipscomb calls it—Botolph Claydon as it is called in the Ordnance Maps, and Botyl Claydon as Lady Verney has it, is a hamlet of East Claydon midway between that village and Middle Claydon. Its name is derived from a word meaning a place enclosed from the waste. There is no church. Botolph House is a substantial manor-house, concerning which the tradition runs that "the last Lord Verney gave his steward seven hundred acres of land and 3000*l.* to build a house on it, that the money was all spent on the foundations and ground-floor." There is an old deed of Edward the Second's reign in which "Alice Avenal of East Claydon" is named—making one more of the long list of names which Sir Walter Scott derived from the county, although Scott found this name also in Derbyshire. Scott once visited at Eythorpe, Lord Chesterfield's seat, and stayed one night at Aylesbury. There is little evidence of his acquaintance with the county, yet he seems to have gone to it for half the English names in his novels, including that of "Varney," which was the frequent spelling and pronunciation of Verney. Certainly Scott would have rejoiced in the material that the *Verney Memoirs* offer to every lover of romance.

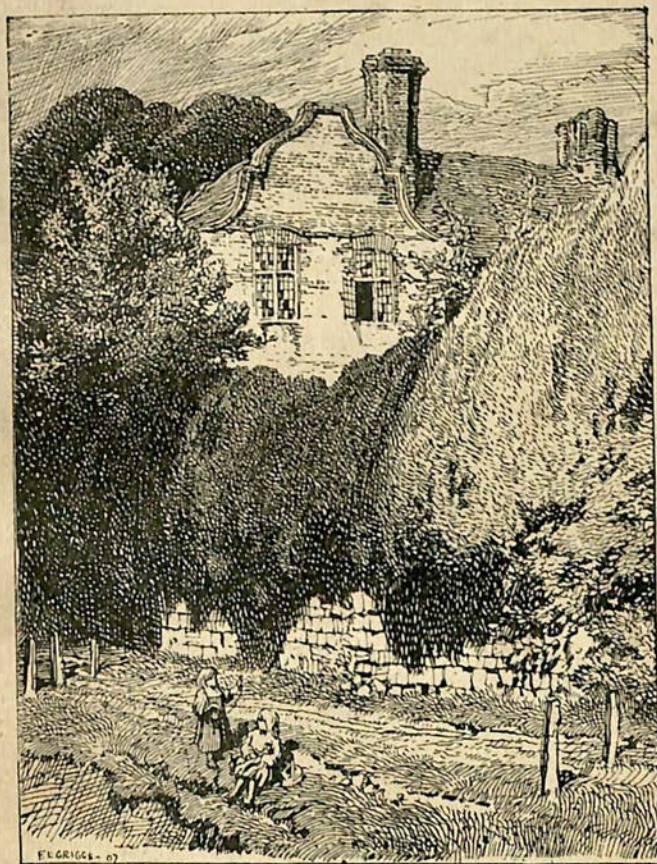
CHAPTER VIII

AYLESBURY TO WINSLOW BY THE BUCKINGHAM ROAD

It is ten miles from Aylesbury to Winslow, a market-town on the London and North Western Railway, once a Royal Residence of the Kings of Mercia. We come first to Hardwick. The church contains, in the chancel, statues of a knight and lady kneeling on crimson cushions. Six daughters kneel behind the lady; behind the knight, eight sons. This is the monument of Sir Robert Lee, son of Benedict Lee of Hulcott. He died in 1616, aged 73. From Sir Robert descended many Lees now residing in the United States. Thus any Americans who have the blood of General Robert Lee in their veins may visit Hartwell, Quarrendon, and Hardwick with added pride, and at this last place, at least, they will find the tomb of an ancestor. Lipscomb tells us that in his day there was a tomb to the south side of the tower of Hardwick Church, then scarcely legible, which recorded that the bones of 247 persons were deposited within. They were discovered in 1818, buried in a field at Holman's Bridge, near Aylesbury. They were assumed to be the remains of those officers and men who perished in the skirmish fought between the troops of Charles the First, under Prince Rupert, and the garrison that held Aylesbury, for the Parliament. Thus runs the inscription:—

Enemies, from their attachment to opposite leaders and to opposite

standards, in the sanguinary conflicts of the Civil War, they were together victims to its fury. United in one common slaughter, they were buried in one common grave, close to the spot where they had lately stood in arms against each other. After the lapse of more than a century and a half,



At Whitchurch.

their bones were collected and deposited together, here, in consecrated ground. May the memory of brave men be respected, and may our County never be called to take part in a contest such as that which this tablet records.

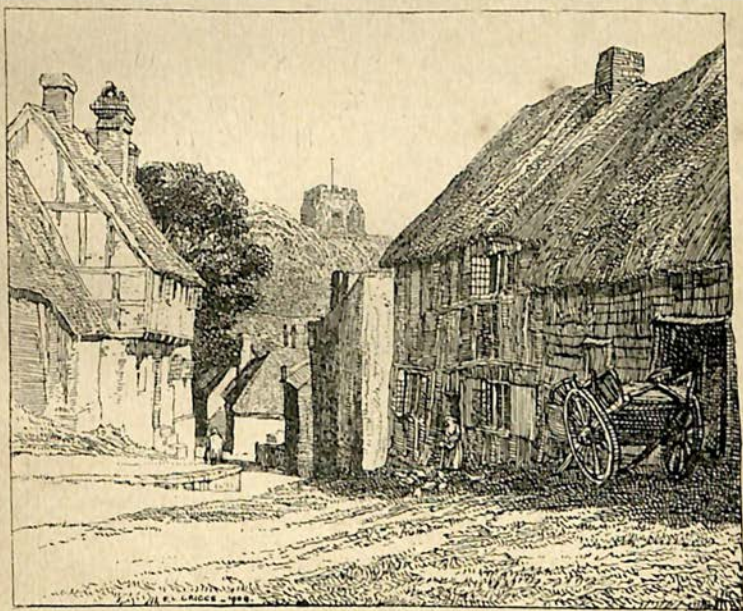
In the neighbouring hamlet of Weeden there is a mansion known as "Lilies," built by the Marquis of Buckingham in 1807, and for thirty-five years the home of Lord Nugent, Hampden's biographer, who published among other works *Legends of the Library of Lilies*. Two monasteries are said to have stood here in the middle ages, known as "Lilies" and "Roses."

Five miles from Aylesbury we come to Whitchurch, where we note on the right a pleasing old seventeenth-century building, which must have looked down upon the Civil War. The church, a little to the right of the high road, is an impressive structure approached through a fine gateway. There are here tablets recording the vicars from 1326 to 1906. Most of the monuments have no particular interest for us. Chief Justice Sir John Smythe was buried here in 1682, and John Westcar, who died in 1833, has a mural tablet with an ox and sheep modelled upon it and the inscription:—

Unblemished let me live, or die unknown :
Oh, grant an honest fame, or grant me none.

Westcar was a grazier, celebrated in his day for the fine cattle he reared on the famous Creslow Pastures near by. One of his prize oxen was exhibited at Smithfield Show in 1799, and sold for £100. This was before the days of illustrated journalism, but an engraving of the ox was published. Creslow, before becoming a hamlet of Whitchurch, was a substantial village, but its church has now disappeared, as has also Bolebec Castle—all but the earthworks. One of the Bolebec family came over with the Conqueror. Tradition credits his son with building a castle which stood on Castle Hill on the west side of the village. This castle after falling into a ruinous state, was finally demolished in the Civil War of the seventeenth century. Creslow Manor House, now a farmhouse, is of the time of Edward the Third. The earliest of our county historians, Browne Willis, attributes many changes in it to the

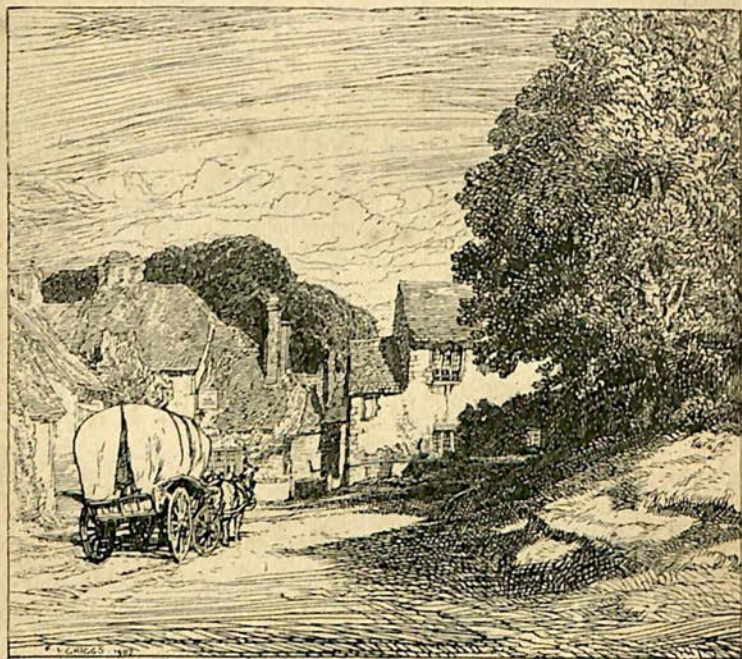
Lord of the Manor in Charles the First's reign—Cornelius Holland. To him Charles the First granted the Crown lands of Creslow Pastures in 1635. Prior to that they had been used for feeding cattle for the Royal household. There is a document of Queen Elizabeth's reign placing these pastures under the control of "the chief clerk of our kitchen, for the benefit of our household." Holland afterwards became a



Whitchurch.

Commonwealth man and a bitter enemy of the Royalists. Willis calls him "a miscreant upstart" and says that he was "born in a neighbouring cottage." He was actually born in Colchester. According to Clarendon, he had the chief hand in drawing up the charges against Charles, but he did not sign the death-warrant. He was excepted at the Restoration from the Bill of Indemnity, but escaped to the Continent, and died at Lausanne.

We leave the high-road to Buckingham for a time to follow the road through Oving and North Marston. Oving is a very pretty village. One of its inns is called "The Black Boy." Its church is picturesque, with an oak roof and rood-screen. A memorial tablet commemorates Henry Lovebond, "who was distinguished for his learning and integrity and those other



Oving

virtues which are the ornaments of human life." One aisle of the church is said to have been demolished in the Civil War. At Oving is the famous *quinque-via*, mentioned in old manuscripts, where five ancient roads appear to have met. "British trackways" Lipscomb entitles them; but Browne Willis, who wrote in 1755, recalls that in the memory of people still living

there was a sign-post here for the five ways, one of the signs pointing in the direction of Sir John Shorne's shrine, which we are about to visit. Pitchcot, or Pitchcolt, the neighbouring village, has a church which is beautifully situated, but it has little history of importance. We walk back to Oving, and thence continue our journey for two miles to North Marston, associated with two widely different personalities: Sir John Shorne and John Camden Neild. Sir John was the rector here from 1290 to 1314:

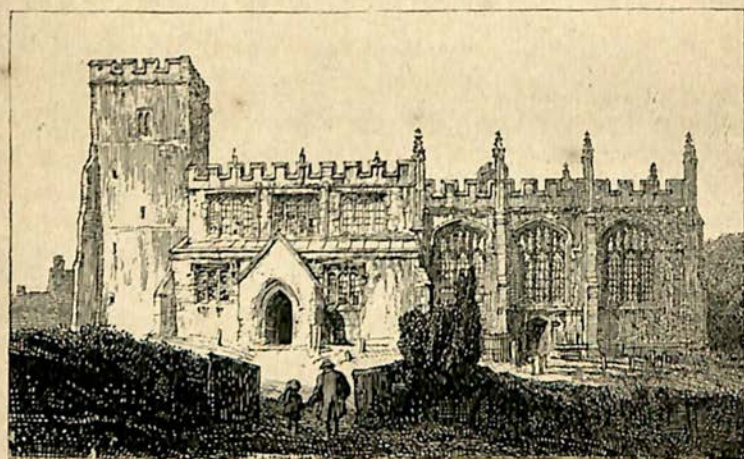
Sir John Shorne
Gentleman borne
Conjured the devil into a horn

is an old rhyme of the district in which "horn" has been substituted for "boot." Shorne is supposed to have given miraculous properties to a chalybeate spring in the village. This spring had the power of offering relief for scorbutic and cutaneous diseases, and hence the sign-post to Sir John Shorne's well, to which we have already referred. An illustration of the actual conflict between Shorne and the devil was to be found on the wall of the Holy Well which was here in the seventeenth century, and the saint, the devil, and the boot are discoverable in the window of more than one English church, even to our day. Of Shorne, tradition tells that "his knees became horney by the frequency of his prayers." John Foxe, referring to the grievances of the Protestants in this county, says that "some were compelled to make pilgrimage to Sir John Shorne,"—that is, to this well.

Camden Neild, who was so noisily associated with North Marston, at his death in 1852, was a barrister who resided in lodgings with an old housekeeper at Chelsea. He held other farms in Buckinghamshire than those at North Marston, one being at Buckland, near Tring, but we are here in the heart of his great property. "He never spent a shilling on his farms," says one chronicler,¹ "and exacted the utmost farthing of rent. On

¹ *Recollections of Old County Life*. By J. K. Fowler (Longmans), 1894.

one occasion he was found hanging by the neck in an outhouse, by one of his tenants, who cut him down and saved his life, for which service he gave his deliverer a small reward." In short, Neild was a miser of doubtful sanity. When he died he left the whole of his property, worth more than a quarter of a million, to Queen Victoria, although he had never even spoken to her Majesty. The Queen devoted most of the money to the erection of Balmoral, although she restored the chancel of North Marston Church, and erected



North Marston Church.

a large stained glass window to Neild's memory. One has a more pleasant impression of Camden Neild's father, from whom he inherited these North Marston lands. James Neild, who was a London goldsmith, followed the example of Howard by relieving the wants of poor debtors, and by attempting to alleviate the too severe prison discipline of his time. He promoted a society for the relief of persons imprisoned for small debts. He died in 1814. There is a brass plate in North Marston Church, representing a man kneeling at a desk on which lies an open book, and an inscription to "Richard

Sanders, Gent.," who died in 1602, but the most curious tomb is that in the chancel to "Mr. John Virgin, Minister of North Marston," who died in 1694. We note the carved stone hand in the wall which points to the ground, with the inscription: "*He lise just downe thare.*" We may call at a thatched inn bearing the very rare sign, "The Armed Yeoman."

Our next stop is at Grandborough, ten miles from Aylesbury. The station on the Great Central is about a mile away. In the churchyard is a gravestone to "Mrs. Elizabeth Rutland," who died September 6th, 1723, "in the 232^d year of her age." The first of the three figures must have been chiselled through error, as the lady was only 32. A stone near the altar in the church reminds one of the departed glories of Biggin Priory, and in a glass case is an elaborate crucifix from a chantry chapel at Biggin Farm. Right and left of the altar is old stonework from Biggin Priory, and there is a font of great antiquity with a curious lid.

From Grandborough we pass on to Winslow, where we are back again on the high-road to Buckingham, which is six miles away. It is a pleasant red-brick town with a population of nearly two thousand. Here the Mercian Kings are believed to have had a palace, and King Offa held his Court here and planned the foundation of the monastery at St. Albans. That Abbey had a cell near Winslow, afterwards called Big-end or Biggin Farm, whence came the crucifix that we have seen in Grandborough Church. The chapel attached to this ecclesiastical building was pulled down in Charles the Second's reign. The church has the tombs of a local family of importance—that of Lowndes, including the grandfather of William Lowndes, the Secretary to the Treasury in the reign of Queen Anne, usually known as "Ways and Means Lowndes." William Lowndes, is not buried here, but he built Winslow House in 1700 from a design by Inigo Jones. One of his sons continued to reside in Winslow, while

another made his home at Chesham. An epitaph to the memory of Lowndes is worth quoting:—

No ways or means against the tyrant Death
 Could raise supplies to aid thy fund of breath,
 O Lowndes ! it is enacted soon or late,
 Each branch of nature must submit to fate ;
 Each member of that House where thou did'st stand
 Intent on credit, with thy bill in hand,
 Shall equally this imposition bear,
 And in his turn be found deficient here ;
 But trust in Heaven, where surplusses of joy
 And endless produce will all cares destroy !
 And may'st thou there, when thy accounts are past,
 Gain a quietus which shall ever last.

We may note the inscription on a tomb in the chancel, to, "Edward Baswell," who died in 1689. When Sheahan wrote there was a local tradition that Baswell was the King of the Gipsies. Certainly the name of "Boswell," which is probably the same, has a gipsy origin, and the famous biographer of Johnson, with all his Scots and laird's blood, undoubtedly had gipsy blood in his veins. It may be that his family sprang from this village of Winslow. We may add that Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London, who played an important part in the Marian persecutions, and died in the Marshalsea after nine years' captivity in Queen Elizabeth's reign, was for a short time in 1557 vicar here, although his name does not appear in the Register.

Continuing along the Buckingham Road we can turn to the left to Addington, with its park and its modern Manor House, built near the site of an older structure ; the church also is comparatively new, as it was rebuilt in 1858. Lipscomb, who wrote when the old church was there, writes of many tablets to the Busby family. "The learned Sir John Busby" he was called on his tomb.¹ He died in 1700. His son's tomb—Dr. Busby—and his sister's, Abigail Trist,

¹ Memoir of Richard Busby, by G. F. Russell Barker, 1895.

alone remain to-day. This Dr. Busby is not to be confused with *the* Dr. Busby—Richard Busby, who was the most famous headmaster of Westminster School. His best biographer tells us that "though he afterwards assumed the arms of the Busbys of Addington, there is no evidence that he was in any way connected with that family." The great Dr. Busby was buried in Westminster Abbey. We all recall Sir Roger de Coverley standing before his tomb exclaiming, "Dr. Busby! a great Man! he whipp'd my grandfather, a very great Man!" In taking down the chancel of the old church in 1657, a copy of Henry the Eighth's *Primer* was found concealed in the walls. Near the church are the old stocks, although one wonders why they could have been wanted in this tiny village. The population was 93 in 1801, and 102 in 1901—a growth of nine lives in a century.

To the right, a little further north, is Adstock, with a pretty church and some picturesque thatched cottages. Here we come across two names in Sir Walter Scott's novels: "Peverel" and "Avenal." The former, William Peverel or Peverell (Scott spells it "Peveril"), a natural son of the Conqueror, had large estates in Buckinghamshire. He assisted in poisoning Randolph, Earl of Chester, in the reign of King Stephen, and had to flee the country. Henry the Second gave his lands, including Adstock, and large estates in Derbyshire, to William Avenal. The church, dedicated to St. Cecilia, is partly Norman. The chancel roof bears the date of 1597. From Adstock, we follow the high-road to Padbury. We are struck by the sign of an inn on the way, entitled "The Folly." Clarendon describes an episode of the Civil War that took place here:

"A handsome smart conflict between a party of 500 horse and dragoons commanded by Colonel Middleton on the Parliament side, and a regiment of horse commanded by Sir Charles Lucas on the King's; when after a very soldierly contest, and more blood drawn than was usual upon such actions, the King's party prevailed, returning with some prisoners of name, and the slaughter of 100 of their enemy, not without some losses of their own."

From Padbury we may either continue our journey to Buckingham, a mile and a half further on, or we may branch off to the right to Thornborough, noticeable only for the fact that two large barrows have been opened here, one in 1839. This contained Roman coins, bronze jugs, a dish, the hilt of a sword, and a gold ornament. The great battle between Cymbeline and the Roman General Aulus Plautius is supposed to have taken place at Thornborough. We continue our journey for four miles to Thornton. Thornton is on the river Ouse, which here separates us from Northamptonshire. There is an effigy in the church, in alabaster, to John Barton and his wife.

From Thornton we journey to Nash or to Beachampton. Nash was long ago only a hamlet to Thornton and earlier to Whaddon, and its church only dates from 1857. Thornton, indeed, is described in the old guides as Thornton-cum-Nash. The best way to go is from Thornton to Beachampton, and thence south to Nash. Beachampton is on the border of Northamptonshire, the river Ouse forming the boundary of the county. It is three miles from Stony Stratford, which we visit on another journey. Beachampton Hall, which had much distinction in its day, has been converted into a farmhouse, where they show you the ancient banqueting hall, most of the rest of the old building having been destroyed in the eighteenth century. There is a magnificent oak staircase, and some stained glass. There is a quaint brass in the church to "William Bawdyn Blacksmith," who died in 1600. There is also a monument to Sir Simon Benet, with a bust of that worthy, in a large wig and a long cravat of lace. Sir Simon died in 1631, and this monument was erected more than a century after his death by University College, Oxford, to which he had been a great benefactor in his day. Benet left money for the purpose of supplying six poor aged men of Beachampton with jerkins, breeches, and stockings of cloth, once yearly.

From Beachampton we go south to Nash, or south-east to Whaddon. From Nash the road runs direct south to Great Horwood, or from Whaddon almost direct to Little Horwood, these two villages being, however, almost close together. Whaddon is an exceptional place, alike in its church and its hall, although the former is much restored and the latter rebuilt. The church contains a monument to Lord Grey de Wilton, who is one of the notable worthies of Buckinghamshire. Arthur was the fourteenth Baron de Wilton. He fought in the battle of St. Quentin in 1557, and became an important figure under Cecil at Queen Elizabeth's Court. From 1562, when he succeeded his father in the baronetcy, he lived much at Whaddon, and the Queen more than once visited him here. His appointment as Keeper of Whaddon Chase, then Crown lands, led to a quarrel with Sir John Fortescue near Temple Bar, for which he was confined in the Fleet. In 1580 he was appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland. His position in the Desmond Rebellion has been pictured with characteristic rhetoric and partisanship in Froude's *History*. In 1582 Grey returned to England, and the remainder of his life was spent at Whaddon, where he died in 1593. The inscription on his tomb relates his achievements, and states that in Ireland "he rooted out the traytors of the English pale." Arthur Lord Grey's son, Thomas, was brought to trial for participation in the Bye or Priest's Plot at the beginning of James the First's reign. He was condemned to death, but reprieved on the scaffold. He was eleven years a prisoner in the Tower, where he died in 1614. His estates at Whaddon were confiscated and were given by James to his favourite, Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. A tomb of less importance, but of much interest, is that to Mr. Serjeant Pygott, his two wives, and ten children. The Serjeant is presented in brass, in his gown. There is a brass to Margaret Myssenden, who died in 1612. She is in Elizabethan costume. Her son, near by, is represented as a skeleton. Framed and hanging on the wall is a brass to Amy Emerton,

who "gave a clock to the Parish Church" in 1613. There are frescoes in the chancel of the reign of Edward the Third, which were uncovered in 1851. One of them represents the Martyrdom of Thomas à Becket, the four knights with their shields being quite perfect. Note the pulley over the font for raising the lid in the days when it was of stone. It is now of wood. Two interesting names are associated with Whaddon, those of Dr. Cox and Browne Willis. Richard Cox was born here in 1500, and partly educated at the Benedictine priory of Snelshall, near by. He early adopted the doctrines of Luther, and was made Bishop of Ely by Queen Elizabeth in 1559. He assisted in the preparation of the English Liturgy, but is perhaps best known in our day by Elizabeth's supposed speech to him that "if you do not do what I bid you, by God I will unfrock you." This is certainly apocryphal, but he did refuse to obey the Queen on more than one occasion, and was glad to resign his bishopric in 1579. He died in 1581. Browne Willis, the antiquary, whose *Buckingham*, published in 1755, is a mine of wealth to every student of the county, was Lord of the Manor, and resided at Whaddon Hall until his death in 1760. He was born in 1682 at Blandford in Dorsetshire, but his father removed into Buckinghamshire—to Beachampton Hall, soon after. He represented Buckingham in Parliament in 1705. It was at Whaddon that the best part of his life was spent. Here he worked upon the many topographical books associated with his name, and collected the library which he left to Oxford University. We shall find his grave at Fénný Stratford. Lipscomb gives an illustration of Old Whaddon Hall, the home of Browne Willis, and also of its successor, a comparatively new building, which was and still is occupied by the Lowndes family. We have already referred to William Lowndes who was Chairman of Ways and Means in the House of Commons in the reign of Queen Anne, and was always known as "Ways and Means Lowndes." The persistence of the Lowndes family is indicated by the quaint sign on "The Lowndes

Arms" and by the stained glass window "erected by William Lowndes the Squire of this Parish" in 1908. It is told of Browne Willis that his clerical zeal led him to glory in the fact that he had built the stables of Whaddon Hall with the materials of a dissenting chapel that he had bought and pulled down at Fenny Stratford. There was, it may be added, an oak tree in his garden which Willis always insisted was the very tree under which Spenser, who was secretary to Lord Grey de Wilton, had written his *Fairie Queene*. Whaddon Chase has as interesting a history. It is near by a number of pieces of woodland—Thickbase Wood, Thrift Wood, and Broadway Wood. The whole is still known as Whaddon Chase, a chase being a portion of a Royal Forest which the King had granted to a subject. The chase was supposed to be large enough to feed a thousand head of deer.

From Whaddon we drive southward to Little Horwood and Great Horwood, which are two and a half miles apart. There is a picturesque farm here surrounded by a moat. The church of Little Horwood calls for no notice. Great Horwood Church is more interesting. William Warham, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, was rector here in 1487. Warham is best known to our day by the portrait of him in the *Ecclesiastes* of Erasmus. He filled a very considerable part in the history of Henry the Seventh's reign. He crowned Henry the Eighth and Catherine of Arragon in 1509, and he died in 1532. His association with Great Horwood is slight enough. A later worthy, Joseph Spence, has clearer association with the village. Spence was the friend of the poet Pope, and the author of *Literary Anecdotes*. He won Pope's friendship by his essay on the translation of the *Odyssey*. Spence was for ten years Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford. He became Vicar of Great Horwood in 1742. Dr. Johnson praises him as a critic, qualifying his praise by the statement that "his learning was not very great, and his mind not very powerful." "Although he did not reside upon his living,"

says Lipscomb, "he made an annual visit to his parish, and assisted many of the poor inhabitants by his bounty." There is an effigy in brass in the church to a third vicar of less fame—Henry Virgin, who died in 1407. From Little Horwood, instead of taking the road back to Winslow two and a half miles away, we take the turning which leads to Mursley, a village that was once considerably larger than at present, although it has made no remarkable advance in the century of which the statistics have been kept. It was 318 in 1801, and 367 in 1901. Mursley is associated with the name and fame of Sir John Fortescue, who lies buried in the church, with a monument on which he is kneeling opposite to his wife, the figures in painted alabaster. It is really a modest tomb for a man who played so great a part in life. There is a more ornate tomb opposite the chancel to Sir Francis Fortescue with his wife, eight sons, and five daughters. Fortescue was Chancellor of the Exchequer to Queen Elizabeth. He built upon his estates at Salden, near Mursley, "a house of great size and beauty at an expense of some £33,000, equal to not less than £120,000 at the present day."¹ This palace of Salden is now represented by two modest farmhouses a mile across the fields down a rough road. Fortescue sat for Buckinghamshire in the first Parliament of James the First. He died in 1607. A mile southward and we are at Swanbourne, with its Tudor Manor House, its manor farm and other rural charms that are unusually attractive here. The farm is built in the form of a cross. The church has interesting tombs. There is a brass dated 1626 to Thomas Adams, yeoman :—

Who in prime of youth by bloody thieves was slaine
In Lescombe ground his blood ye grasse did staine.

¹ G. K. Fortescue in his *Dictionary of National Biography*. Mr. Fortescue, however, wrongly places Mursley in Oxfordshire.

Another brass plate records that

Here lithe the body of William Neuman Rygt called of many a gode
man

And Isabel also hys wyfe The whyche he lovyd wele i al' his lyfe

The whyche William dyde the sothe to sey ye XVI day of june ye moneth
of May

In the yere of owere lord MCCCCLXII ye whiche soule god bring to his
mercy

And all that this shall leeve or se :

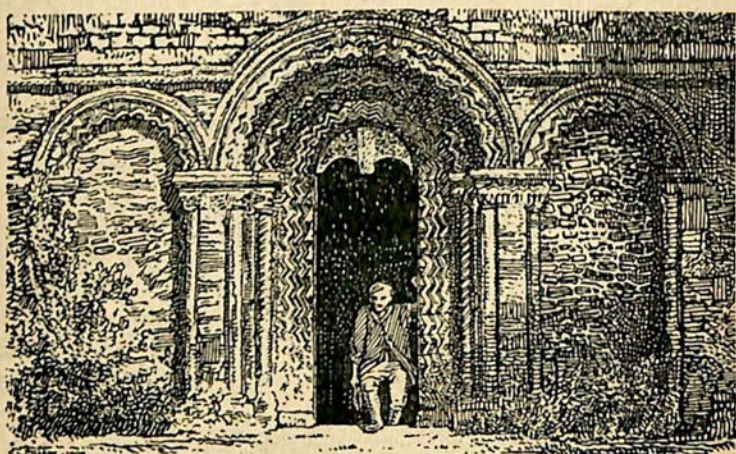
Say the Amen for charyte.

There are an exceptional number of interesting epitaphs in this church for those who care to linger here awhile. They include a slab to "Anna Maria, Relic of William Penn," who died in 1799.

We have now to reach the Aylesbury Road again, turn to the left, and take the first turning on the left for half a mile to visit Hoggeston. We may continue our journey to Dunton and Stewkley. Hoggeston or Hogston is associated with William de Birmingham, to whom Edward the Second granted the right to hold a weekly market at his manor of *Hoebeston*. In 1348 a Walter de Birmingham became Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, and in 1490 Edmund de Birmingham, lord of Hogston, was summoned to Parliament. It is generally held that the effigy of a man in a long robe under an arch on a tomb in the church is that of William de Birmingham, the founder of the church. He holds in his hands a model of a church. Lipscomb throws doubt upon the point, as when the tomb was opened in repairing the church the bones of five or six persons were discovered beneath. Lord Stanhope, the historian, was Lord of the Manor of Hoggeston.

Dunton has a church without a village. The church is picturesque, has one or two brasses, but has no particular history. The place has some association with Sarah Duchess of Marlborough, the termagant widow of the hero of Blenheim, to whom the manor was sold in 1730, that is to say, eight years

after the death of the Duke. When Lipscomb wrote in 1847 there was a village with a population of one hundred—now there is apparently none. From Dunton we go eastward and then northward to Stewkley. The church here is a beautiful building and is one of the best examples of Norman architecture in England. Alike in the exterior and interior it is charming in its zig-zag ornamentation and perfect arches. Browne Willis remarks that in his day there were neither tombs,



Stewkley Church, West Door.

painted glass, nor epitaphs of earlier date than 1669, as Cromwell's troops in the Civil War turned this church into a stable for their horses. We note, however, near the altar a piece of the old decoration—a Virgin and Child. The font also is old and the two arches are very beautiful. In the churchyard there is a gravestone "To the Memory of Robert Bliss who died, Oct 1, 1851 aged 76 years."

Our life is but a winter day
Some only breakfast and away
Others to dinner stay ;

The oldest man that sups
And goes to bed,
Large is his debt who lingers out the day.
To him who lives the shortest
Has the least to pay.

Lipscomb attempts to prove that John Foxe, the martyr-



Stewkley Church.

ologist, was once vicar of Stewkley, but the John Fox who was here in 1545 must have been quite another person, as Foxe of the *Acts and Monuments* was not ordained a deacon until 1550.

In leaving Stewkley we hesitate as to the next stop in our

journey. We can return the way we came to the Aylesbury road and thence to Aylesbury; we can follow the road south to Wing; or we can go north to Drayton Parslow and through Newton Longville to Bletchley and Fenny Stratford. We will take this last route. It would seem that there are twenty places named Drayton, and it has been suggested that they derive their name from being places where *drays* or wagons were made, repaired, or accommodated. Drayton Parslow is five miles from Winslow and seven from Leighton Buzzard. The church has been much restored. The brasses over Bennett Blacknelle and his wife who possessed an estate here have disappeared. The inscription ran:—

Of your Charitie pray for the soules of Benet Blacknelle and Agnes his wife who died the xxx day of Sept. MDCXXXV. With the children's soules J'u have m'cy Amen.

At Newton Longville or Newington Longueville as it is described in Domesday Book, we are a little more than two miles from Bletchley. Walter Giffard Earl of Buckinghamshire founded a Benedictine Priory at Longueville in Normandy, and established a cell to the priory here in the twelfth century—hence the name. Nothing will strike one so much, in one's wanderings through the country, as the connection between old Norman abbeys and the religious houses founded in England in association with them. At the dissolution of foreign priories in the reign of Henry the Sixth, that monarch gave the manor of Newton Longueville in 1444 to New College, Oxford, and that College did much to beautify the church. On the chancel wall is a brass to William Grocyn, Rector, who was born in 1442 and died in 1522. He was the friend of Erasmus and was godfather to Lilly the grammarian. He was one of the first teachers of Greek at Oxford University. Grocyn was Rector here from 1479 to 1504. He was buried at Maidstone. There is no vestige left of the gallows that Lipscomb describes as flourishing in his time. This feudal privilege of a gallows was a survival from the abbey privileges. Strangely enough, the

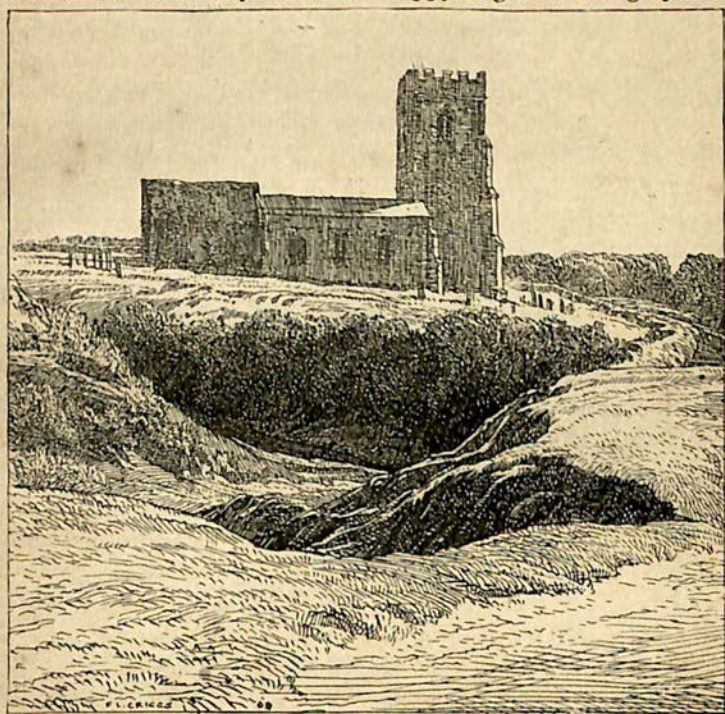
presence of this incongruous gallows in a small country village did not prevent the perpetration of a murder here in 1814. A small tradesman in the village named Verney was found dead in his shop, he having evidently been knocked on the head by a mallet or hammer. The murderer was never discovered.

From Newton Longville we go on to Bletchley and Fenny Stratford, which had a certain renown in the past through both being associated with Browne Willis, the antiquary. His wife is buried in the church at Bletchley and he is buried at Fenny Stratford. Now there is a closer alliance, for since the development of railway works at Bletchley it has ceased to be a village and has practically grown into Fenny Stratford. Bletchley village and Bletchley Park are, however, to be found and with them Bletchley Church. The village is three-quarters of a mile from the high road and the church a quarter of a mile from the village. All the same, we are now in Bletchley as we pass on towards Fenny Stratford. Bletchley Park and Manor came into the hands of Browne Willis's grandfather, Dr. Thomas Willis, in 1674. Browne Willis was Lord of the Manor from 1724 until his death. He repaired and decorated Bletchley Church, and did much for Fenny Stratford, reviving its market, and rebuilding its church after the latter had been destroyed by fire in 1746. We find this well-known historian of Buckinghamshire at every turn through our wanderings. He was elected to Parliament for Buckingham in 1705, and more than fifty years afterwards he assisted to build the tower of its church. His was a long and busy life. He was very eccentric, but he is an active and pleasant figure in our story. Mrs. Browne Willis died in 1724. She claimed descent from Walter Giffard Earl of Buckingham, who came over with the Conqueror. Lipscomb claims that she was "part author with a worthy clergyman of the neighbourhood of that pious and popular work *The Whole Duty of Man*." The tomb of Mrs. Willis is a family tomb—a round altar-tomb with many in-

scriptions. It records that she had ten children and died at the age of 38. Leaving the church and village we return to the main road to Fenny Stratford, passing the works of the London and North Western Railway, of which Bletchley is an important junction. We now reach Fenny Stratford, a large town to-day as Buckinghamshire towns go, that is to say, with a population of 5000. It was once a mere hamlet of Bletchley, then it outgrew Bletchley altogether, and finally the railway works seem once more to be turning the tables. We are here seven miles from the other Stratford—Stony Stratford. We are also on the famous Watling Street, a reminder of the Roman occupation, and Roman remains have been found here, for it was the Roman military station, Magiovitum. The church of Fenny Stratford was long only a chapel-of-ease to Bletchley Church. But Browne Willis rebuilt the church, partly at his own expense and partly by subscriptions, and there the red brick structure stands to-day by the roadside, little of an ornament to the not very beautiful town. The foundation stone was laid by Willis in 1724. He called it St. Martin's Church, and associated it with St. Martin's Day, for no better reason than that his grandfather was born in St. Martin's Lane, London. He placed his grandfather's portrait in the church with an inscription under it. It is now in the vestry. Willis is himself buried here—within the Communion rails—with an inscription that records his death on February 5, 1760, aged 78.

But we have not yet done with Browne Willis. We meet him at our next stopping-place, which is Bow Brickhill, two miles from Fenny Stratford. We reach the loftily-placed church, which we can see for miles around, by passing along Watling Street and climbing a lane where our car or carriage almost ploughs over a deep red sand. We pass through the village, a collection of pleasantly placed cottages, up to the church, which is most attractively situated, with pine woods bounding it on one side and a gorse-clad hill on the other.

It is 530 feet above the sea. Inside the church there is only one simple monument. This is in the wall of the chancel, and is to one William Watson "of a yeoman race," who was "parson of this church full thirty and six years." He died in 1608, "in the sixth year of the happy reigne of Kinge James



Bow Brickhill.

over England." This church was restored in 1756 by Browne Willis.

There are three Brickhills, of which this is the most interesting. An old rhyme runs:—

Here stand three Brickhills all in a row
Great Brickhill, Little Brickhill, and Brickhill of the Bow.

Bow Brickhill owes its name to one Henry de Bovels who flourished here in the reign of King John. To reach Little Brickhill we have to cross Watling Street again. Little Brickhill truly is scarcely worth a visit. The monuments in the church are of small interest. More attention will be given to the grave of "True Blue" in the churchyard, near the south porch. "Here lieth the body of True Blue," who died in 1724. Who "True Blue" was, history does not tell, but he probably lived here under an assumed name, which he carried to the grave. We take a turning opposite Little Brickhill church for Great Brickhill, and pass through a piece of very beautiful scenery, more pine woods, a contrast to the somewhat monotonous road by which we reached Fenny Stratford. In Great Brickhill Church the name of Duncombe predominates. William Peirce, a nephew of the famous Hugh Peters, occupied the living from 1656 to the Restoration. Hugh Peters is stated to have had associations with Great Brickhill, and it was once inaccurately supposed that he died here. Peters was a famous Nonconformist divine, whose eloquence gained large numbers to the armies of the Parliament during the Civil War. He was brought to trial at the Restoration and executed at Charing Cross in October, 1660. The statement as to his death at Great Brickhill which appeared in the *Weekly Post* of August 9th, 1659, was doubtless made by friends to distract attention from him and help him to escape.

From the Brickhills we return to Aylesbury through Stoke Hammond, Soulbury, and Wing, but this last place we will leave till another day. At Stoke Hammond there is little to delay us. It was named after Hamon, grandson of Maigno Brito, a powerful Norman who held "Stockes" in the Domesday Survey. The church is on the side of the hill, and the village is picturesque. The only things to note in the church in spite of its many tombs is the quaint font, of the Early English period, and the poor-box dated 1610.

We may find more to interest us in Soulbury, where there

is a pleasant common with a pond before we reach the church. The Lovett family seem to have reigned here for hundreds of years. They have a clear run from the fourteenth century and Richard de Lovett, the founder of the family, came over with the Conqueror. A handsome cross in the churchyard commemorates William Gough Gubbins Lovett, who died in 1893, and in the church are beautiful tombs to the family, notably one in marble erected by Sir Jonathan Lovett in 1786 to his mother. There is a fine marble tomb in the chancel, with an urn and some small angels, to Robert Lovett who died in 1699. Opposite is the tomb of a knight and lady kneeling. Another Sir Robert Lovett erected this monument to his wife in 1609. From the churchyard we see the vicarage garden before us, facing the church door, which seems to be kept constantly open—a practice that might be copied with advantage throughout the country. There is something supremely soothing in lounging in this churchyard as we did one September day when the trees were changing their colour, hay was being gathered in and the view of thatched and half-timbered cottages enhanced the charm of the scene. Hence we may drive through Liscombe Park, past the seat of the Lovetts, back to Wing and Aylesbury without a stop.

CHAPTER IX

TRING, WING, AND IVINGHOE

IF we leave Aylesbury by the Tring road and 'skirt the border of the county so as to return by the Leighton Buzzard road from Wing, we may visit no fewer than seventeen towns or villages with churches in one day. But the traveller in search of literary or historical associations will perhaps be contented with but two or three of these—with Drayton Beauchamp, which recalls the Judicious Hooker, and with the places named in that famous rhyme,

Tring, Wing, and Ivinghoe
Hampden of Hampden did foregoe
For striking of ye prynce a blow,
And glad he might escape it so.

No Hampden, as a matter of fact, ever owned these three manors of Tring, Wing, and Ivinghoe, and the legend that one of the family lost them as a penalty for striking the Black Prince has no historical foundation, although the fact that the Black Prince lived at Risborough while the Hampdens lived near by, as we shall see, makes the legend plausible. Happily, however, Sir Walter Scott borrowed the name of Ivinghoe from this ballad for his incomparable story, *Ivanhoe*, as he borrowed the name "*Waverley*" from the Abbey near Farnham. Scott went to Buckinghamshire, as we have already seen, for several of the names in his novels and he certainly visited Aylesbury.

He never, however, so far as the present occupant, Mrs. Humphry Ward, has been able to learn, stayed at Stocks, near Tring, three miles from Ivinghoe, as is sometimes stated, although he was, as Mrs. Ward kindly reminds me, a great friend of James Adam Gordon, who once lived at Stocks as well as on an estate not far from Abbotsford. Tring is not in



Weston Turville.

Buckinghamshire but in Hertfordshire, and it does not come into this story as do Wing and Ivinghoe.

Let us then, in leaving Aylesbury by the Tring Road, the old Akeman Street, turn off to the right for Weston Turville, a pleasant village, notable as the place where most of the so-called Aylesbury ducks are reared. It owes its name to the family of Turville, to whom the manor belonged from the reign

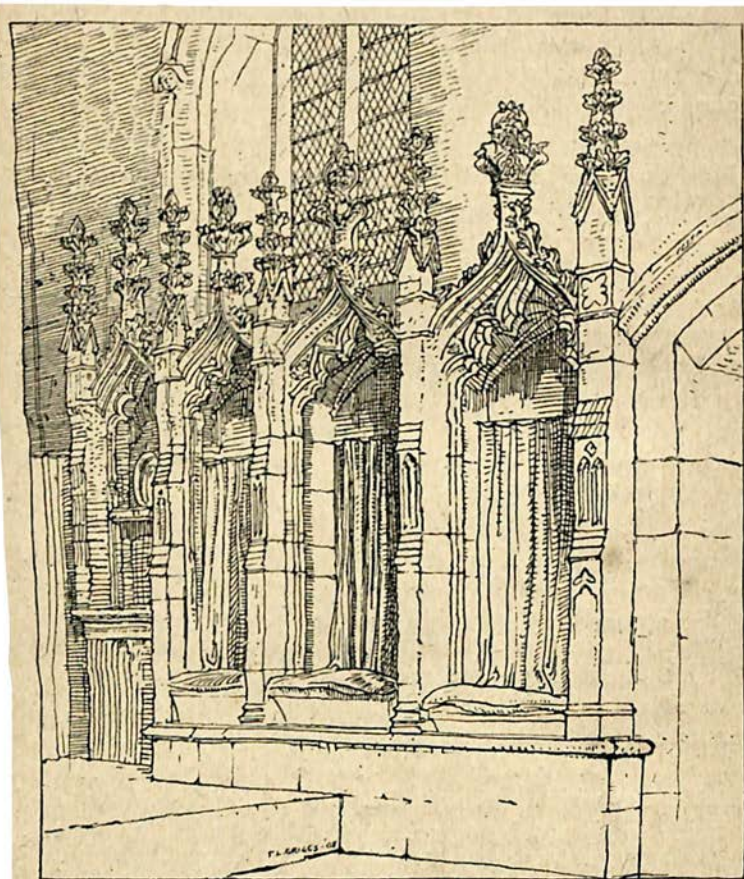
of King John onward for many years. The church is some way from the main road to Tring, prettily situated among trees. We found the rector with his family playing tennis in the rectory garden on the occasion of our visit, and he courteously sent his son for the key of the church. We recall the circumstance because in 1855 a labourer excavating in this garden discovered a Roman vessel. Other relics of the Roman occupation were subsequently found, including a cup and two coins of the reigns of Vespasian and Adrian. There is little of interest in the church—only tablets to the memory of former rectors. Lipscomb gives an illustration of the curious font and of the brass effigy of a man with folded hands, the inscription of which had disappeared even in his day. At Weston Turville we can get into the Lower Icknield Way to Halton, the park of which is bounded on one side by the high road from Wendover to Tring. The park belongs to Mr. Alfred de Rothschild. The church is in the park. It has a brass effigy to Chief Baron Bradshaw, who died in 1553. He is in his robes at a desk, his wife opposite, behind him are four sons, behind her four daughters, and the Baron's arms are above. The wife, Dame Joan Bradshaw, was actually buried elsewhere.

Halton Park and Aston Clinton Park adjoin, being separated by a canal. Here is another of the many houses of the Rothschild family in this county, and it has the pleasant characteristics that their domination denotes—an outlook of picturesque modern cottages, of comfortable homesteads, and of delightful stretches of parkland is visible from the road. There are seven important Rothschild mansions within eight miles of Aylesbury, those at Mentmore, Tring, Aston Clinton, Halton, Wing, Eythorpe, and Waddesdon. The mansion at Aston Clinton is new, having been built by Sir Anthony de Rothschild in the sixties of last century. On its site had stood the manor-house of the Lake family. A Sir Thomas Lake in James the First's reign came into over-much prominence

through the fact that his wife and daughter recklessly perjured themselves in order to incriminate Frances Bridges Countess of Exeter, but James distinguished himself in his British Solomon fashion by unravelling the mystery, and when the case came on the Lakes were heavily fined. Sir Thomas complained that his wife and daughter's action had cost him £30,000 and the loss of the king's favour. The Lakes, however, came to the front again with General Lake, who after having acted as Castlereagh's butcher in suppressing the '98 revolt in Ireland,¹ was, in 1800, made Commander-in-Chief in India, where he won a great battle at Delhi and brought that city and many others under British control. He was rewarded with the title of Baron Lake of Delhi, Laswaree and Aston Clinton. He had, by the way, represented Aylesbury in the House of Commons from 1790 to 1802. He died in 1808, and was buried in the church of Aston Clinton. The title became extinct with the death of Lake's two sons, both of whom followed him in the peerage, the last dying childless in 1848. The Lake family, including the hero of Delhi, are buried in a vault beneath the chancel and commemorated by a marble tablet in the north aisle. Here honour has been given to a certain John Somner, of the East India Company, who has a memorial in the chancel opposite the organ. The church has been restored and modernised to excess. The churchyard is more interesting, although its most conspicuous monument is to a Bow Street magistrate named Minshull, who died in 1840. He came of a Buckinghamshire family, one member of which was knighted by Charles the First. The church is beautifully surrounded by lime trees and is full of good shrubs. In the church register are many entries concerning a family named Wells, of much distinction in the

¹ He routed the Irish force at Vinegar Hill and he wrote to Castlereagh that "the carnage was dreadful. The rascals made a tolerably good fight of it." His ruthless severity after the fight is even condemned by W. E. H. Lecky.

annals of the parish, but one entry records the burial of "William Wells, Malster and a Rogue." Someone has



Piscina and Sedilia at Aston Clinton.

written under it *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*. Those who, led by the guide-books, seek to find the Shepherd's Grave in the neighbourhood of Aston Clinton will, we fear, seek in vain.

So long ago as 1847 it was stated that the spot had long been ploughed over. It is a fact that a shepherd named Faithful, delighted with the prospect afforded on the slope of the Chilterns where he kept his master's flock, extracted a promise from his fellow shepherds that at his death they would bury him here. They fulfilled the promise, and for many long years afterwards might be seen in the turf the simple word "Faithful," which was preserved by the peasants of the locality for many generations.

Two miles from Aston Clinton church is St. Leonard's, where there was once a "cell" to Missenden Abbey. A "cell" in monastery parlance is much the same seemingly as a "chapel of ease" in church records. There was formerly here a church of so great an antiquity that in the usual list of clergy given by Lipscomb, the first entry is Thomas Chanting, Priest, who died in 1273. Now it is a most modern-looking building, for after the Civil War only the bare walls remained, and it has had many a restoration since it was rebuilt by one Cornelius Wood at the restoration. Cornelius became a lieutenant-general in Queen Anne's reign, as we learn from the monument to his parents in this church. A mile from Aston Clinton we find the village of Buckland, but it has no history that appeals to us. We are eager to reach Drayton Beauchamp. Before doing so we shall be well advised to read Isaac Walton's "Life of Mr. Richard Hooker." That marvellous draper-author wrote two immortal books, *The Compleat Angler* and the *Lives*, and the latter is not perhaps as well known to the present generation as it deserves to be. Its quaint biographies may be taken with a few grains of salt, it is true, as when, for example, he tells us that Hooker at nineteen years of age had "attained into a perfection in all the learned languages," although we would willingly accept the impression that Hooker's genius for learning had placed him in a position in which "what he knew, he knew better than most men." In 1577 he became a Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He

had for pupils Edwin Sandys and George Cranmer, the former the Sir Edwin Sandys of the *Speculum Europæ* and brother of George Sandys, the latter a nephew of the martyred Archbishop. Hooker took Orders in 1580, and preached the same year at St. Paul's Cross. Walton's account of the preacher's venture into matrimony is deliciously quaint. He married one Joan Churchman, "who brought him neither beauty nor portion." But here we will let Walton speak, for the passage is a memorable one in the literary history of Buckinghamshire :—

By this marriage the good man was drawn from the tranquillity of his College ; from that garden of piety, of pleasure, of peace, and a sweet conversation, into the thorny wilderness of a busy world ; into those corroding cares that attend a married Priest, and a country Parsonage ; which was Drayton-Beauchamp in Buckinghamshire, not far from Aylesbury, and in the Diocese of Lincoln ; to which he was presented by John Chenny, Esq.—then Patron of it—the 9th of December, 1584, where he behaved himself so as to give no occasion of evil, but as St. Paul adviseth a minister of God—"in much patience, in affliction, in anguishes, in necessities, in poverty and no doubt in long-suffering" ; yet troubling no man with his discontent and wants.

And in this condition he continued about a year ; in which time his two pupils, Edwin Sandys and George Cranmer, took a journey to see their tutor ; where they found him with a book in his hand,—it was the Odes of Horace—he being then like humble and innocent Abel, tending his small allotment of sheep in a common field ; which he told his pupils he was forced to do then, for that his servant was gone home to dine, and assist his wife to do some necessary household business. But when his servant returned and released him, then his two pupils attended him unto his house, where their best entertainment was his quiet company, which was presently denied them ; for Richard was called to rock the cradle ; and the rest of their welcome was so like this, that they staid but till next morning, which was time enough to discover and pity their tutor's condition ; and they having in that time rejoiced in the remembrance, and then paraphrased on many of the innocent recreations of their younger days, and other like diversions, and thereby given him as much present comfort as they were able, they were forced to leave him to the company of his wife Joan, and seek themselves a quieter lodging for the next night. But at their parting from him, Mr. Cranmer said, "Good tutor, I am sorry your lot has fallen in no better ground, as to your parsonage ; and more sorry that your wife

proves not a more comfortable companion, after you have wearied yourself in your restless studies." To whom the good man replied, "My dear George, if Saints have usually a double share in the miseries of this life, I, that am none, ought not to repine at what my wise Creator hath appointed for me ; but labour—as indeed I do daily—to submit mine to his will, and possess my soul in patience and peace."

When Edwin Sandys returned to London he solicited his father, the Archbishop of York, to give Hooker a more remunerative benefice, and the Mastership of the Temple which he received in 1585 was the consequence. The remainder of the life of the distinguished author of the *Ecclesiastical Polity* does not belong to our county. The church has one pleasant reminder of Hooker's former presence there, the pulpit which in 1867 was erected to his memory. The most noteworthy monument is one in the chancel to William Lord Cheyne with his wife Gertrude ; his coronet is on a cushion in front. He was the second and last Viscount Newhaven and had been M.P. for Amer-sham and for Buckinghamshire. Cheyne Row, where Carlyle lived, was named after him, for he and his father owned the Manor of Chelsea, which he sold to Sir Hans Sloane. He died in 1638. His widow, who died four years later, erected this monument with the testimonial on their joint tomb that for "forty and eight years they lived together in wedlock, in a constant emulation of acts of tenderness and friendship towards each other, the only strife they ever knew." An earlier Cheyne is commemorated by a brass effigy of a knight in armour, which was formerly in the pavement of the aisle but has since been removed to the wall of the chancel. It is dated 1575. There are other tombs of interest in the church. The font is Norman. In the vestry is an illustration of the church before its restoration and a portrait of the Rev. Basil Wood, the rector to whom this restoration was due. The Rectory House connected with Hooker's memory was destroyed in 1826 and a new one replaces it. General Lake, to whom we have already referred, lived at Turrett House near

by, and here during his minority George the Fourth, when Prince of Wales, stayed under his charge, Dr. Lockman, then rector, being his tutor. Hang Hill in the neighbourhood is supposed to owe its name to the circumstance that it was devoted to the execution of the outlaws who infested the Chiltern Hills in an earlier age.

Back in the Tring road to Aylesbury we are speedily in the very pleasing County of Hertfordshire. Instead of passing Wing and Tring we can leave this road to the left and follow the Upper Icknield Way to Pitstone and Ivinghoe. Near Ivinghoe Common, on our right is the famous Ashridge Park which was once partly included in Buckinghamshire but is now all in Hertfordshire. At a convent here in A.D. 1300 died Edmund Earl of Cornwall. This was a convent of the Order of Bonhommes founded by Prince Edward, brother of Henry the Third. He brought from Germany to his castle at Berkhamstead a gold box which he believed to contain some of the actual blood of Christ. Many a story grew around the relic and much controversy as to its genuineness. In the reign of Henry the Eighth when all things were questioned, a Bishop at St. Paul's Cross attempted to demonstrate that the so-called blood was only "honey clarified and coloured with saffron." Meanwhile the heart of Prince Edward, buried at Ashridge, had also its meed of honour and the convent was long famous and distinguished. Buckinghamshire gentlemen directed by will that they should be buried here. At this convent also, in 1291, King Edward the First from his Castle at Berkhamstead, where he had kept the previous Christmas, ordered the National Parliament to meet, at which there was much discussion as to the raising of revenue for the Crown.

Skelton, the poet, has commemorated the groves of Ashridge :—

The Bonhommes at Ashridge beside Barcamstede
Where the sange royal is, Christis blode so rede .
A pleasanter place than Asheridge is, harde were to finde,

As Skelton rehearseth with words few and playne
In his distichon made on verses twaine :
Fraxinus in clivo frondetque viret sine rivo
Non est sub clivo similis sine flumine vivo.

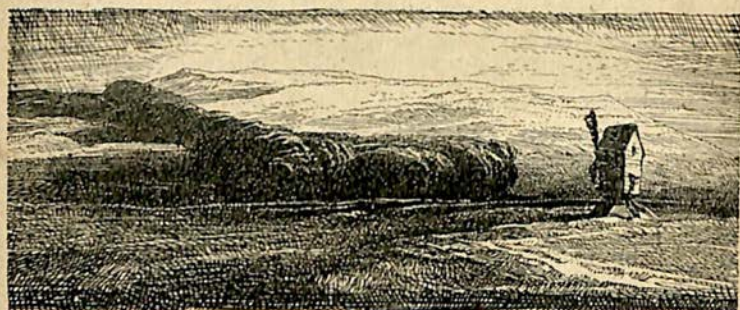
Queen Elizabeth was staying here when she was arrested by her sister Mary charged with participation in Wyatt's conspiracy. She feigned illness but was carried off in a litter. A new mansion was erected in 1606 and another in 1800. This last is a beautiful building full of interesting pictures and curios, but after all it does not rightly come into our story. Pitstone, however, which has five other names—Pitston, Pitteston, Pittlesthorpe, Pightlestorne and Pincilesthorpe—is in Buckinghamshire. The Manor of Pitstone and Ashridge were long granted together. There is nothing to detain us at Pitstone. We glance at a brass inscribed "Joh'es Killyngworth" who died in 1412 and a Norman font and we are satisfied.

It is pleasant to be at Ivinghoe quite apart from the association with Sir Walter Scott's great novel and many a cyclist has long since discovered the comforts of its inn and the picturesqueness of its neighbourhood. It is a tradition that Ivinghoe was once an assize town, but there is no evidence of this. At the moment it is a village with a population at the last census of 1077 souls as against 1215 a century ago—before Scott gave it its world-wide fame. That that fame has brought no additional population but exactly the contrary is worth recording.

The view of the Chilterns from here is exceptionally fine. The church contains brasses and tablets of no special interest to us. The tomb in the chancel presenting a stone effigy clothed as a priest, known in the locality as "Grandfather Greybeard," has caused speculation. It has been assigned to Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, King Stephen's brother, but later speculation favours the idea that it is Peter de Chaceport, rector of Ivinghoe between 1241 and 1254, the founder of Ravenstone Priory, which we have yet to visit.

While at Ivinghoe we may take a pleasant three mile walk or drive to Edlesborough or Eddlesborough right on the border of the county adjoining Bedfordshire. It is called Eowbeige in Domesday Book. The church stands on a hill. Lipscomb gives an illustration of a decorated spire that was destroyed by fire in 1828. There are many tombs but none that interests us. The vicar in 1805 was Henry John Todd, of whom the county historian tells us that his new and enlarged edition of Johnson's *Dictionary* "will be a lasting monument of his taste, learning, and erudition."

From Ivinghoe we follow the road to the north to Cheddington-

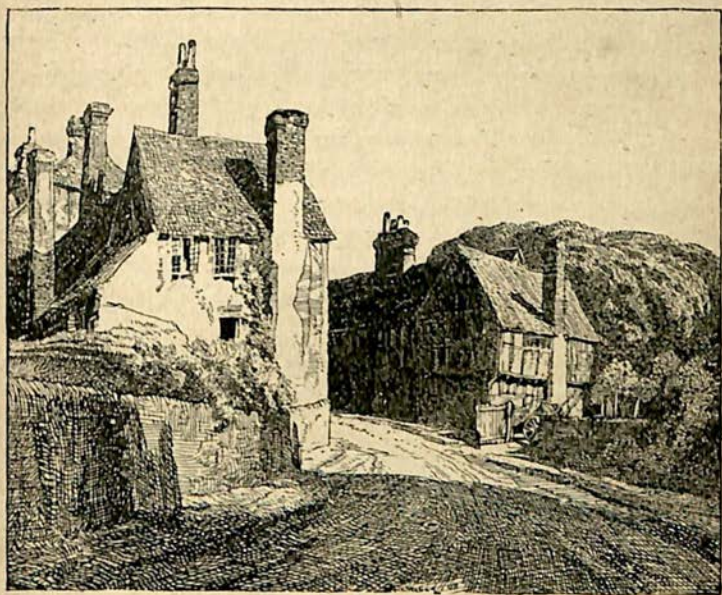


Ivinghoe.

ton, which we reach by a turning on our left. It is a two mile journey to the London and North-Western station here, which serves as a junction for Aylesbury. The church, which is a quarter of a mile from the village, is so much restored as to be scarcely worth a visit, except for the view. Lipscomb says that one of the bells, more ancient than the others, is inscribed "*Sca Maria ora pro nobis,*" but we have not been able to ascertain the present day condition of this bell.

From Cheddington through byways we may reach Slapton, or go straight to Mentmore. Slapton is associated with John Kemp (or Kempe), who was rector here up to the year 1407, when he passed to a London living, then Archbishop of York,

of Canterbury, and a Cardinal. He died in 1454, and was buried at Canterbury. Kemp had accompanied Henry the Fifth in the invasion of Normandy, and he was on the Council of Henry the Sixth, holding the Chancellorship during that king's minority. He played a great part in an interesting period of our history, but we search in vain through the various



Ivinghoe.

authorities, which include the *Paston Letters*, for any really flesh and blood portrait of this famous prelate. The most interesting monument in Slapton Church is a brass to James Tornay, "late Yeoman of the Crown to Kyng Henry the VIII." He is between his two wives, and there are nine children.

We next come to Mentmore, Lord Rosebery's Buckinghamshire seat, which he obtained through his marriage with a daughter of Baron Meyer de Rothschild. The baron built this

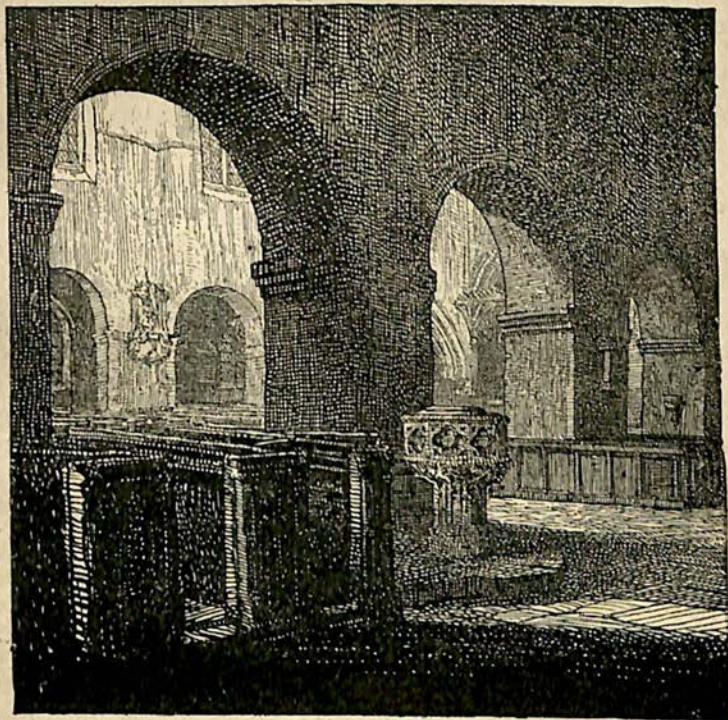
beautiful building, rich in paintings, tapestries, and marbles. The Manor of Mentmore belonged before the Conquest to Queen Edith, wife of Edward the Confessor, but the successive owners have no interest for us, and we seek in vain in the much restored church for any memorials of importance. It is only as one of the numerous Rothschild holdings in this county that Mentmore attracts attention. The house was built in 1851 from designs by Sir Joseph Paxton, whose year's work included the Crystal Palace for the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park. Modern guide-books only reflect in their descriptions the account of the interior of Mentmore Towers given by Sheehan. The public is not admitted.

Our next stop is at Wing, which played some small part in the great Civil War. Lord Dormer of Wing, created Earl of Carnarvon, had a mansion here which was sacked by the Parliamentary troops. Three years earlier King Charles spent a night here, and the next morning one of his soldiers was hanged on a tree in Wing for stealing the Communion plate from the church. There are some quaint carved figures in the roof of the church. There is a monument in the chancel to Sir William Dormer, who died in 1575, and his wife, Dame Dorothy, at the feet of the former a fox, of the latter a leopard, and another opposite to Sir Robert Dormer and his wife, Dame Elizabeth. There is also a brass to the memory of one Thomas Coates, who was porter at Ascott Hall, formerly the seat of the Dormers, and now of one of the Rothschild family. He is represented with a porter's staff under his feet and a key beside him. The inscription, dated 1648, runs as follows:—

Honest old Thomas Coates, that sometime was
Porter at Ascott Hall, hath now (alas !)
Left his key, lodge, fyre, friends, and all, to have
A room in heaven. This is that good man's grave
Reader, prepare for thine, for none can tell
But that you two may meet to-night. Farewell.

There is the shaft of the old cross to be seen in the church.

yard. Dr. Dodd, the unhappy clergyman who gave us the *Beauties of Shakespere* and was hanged for forgery at Tyburn in 1777, was Vicar here from 1775 until his death. He received the living from the Earl of Chesterfield, but he was already heavily involved in debt, and his new clerical duties



Wing Church.

did not prevent him from "descending so low as to become the editor of a newspaper." At William Dodd's "unfortunate death," as Lipscomb has it, Lord Chesterfield gave the living to Henry Jerome de Salis, who afterwards became Count de Salis.

From Wing we follow the road to Cubblington, three and a half miles on our way. Stewkley, which we have already seen, is two miles in another direction. Cubblington (or Cublington) Church contains a high rotatory desk to which are chained two volumes of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. This was placed here in 1685, in the very year, that is, that James the Second came to the throne. In this and succeeding years it was very common to fix Foxe's *Martyrs* in the churches. When Lipscomb wrote in 1847 it stood in the chancel. Desk and book have since been transferred to the vestry. We go southward and find, four miles from Wing, Aston Abbots, so called because the manor was once in the possession of the Abbey of St. Albans, and the country seat of the Abbots. The Abbey, now Aston House, was long occupied by Sir James Clark Ross, the arctic traveller, who discovered the magnetic pole in 1831. It offers a pleasant walk, or rather walks--the *Lovers' Walk* and the *Bishop's Walk*. Ross's adventures in the way of arctic and antarctic exploration are well known, and particularly his journey into the Antarctic Circle with the two ships *Erebus* and *Terror* in 1839, and his discovery of Mount Erebus. In 1848-9 he commanded the Franklin relief expedition. He died at Aston Abbots in 1862, and lies buried in the churchyard.

From Aston Abbots we get back on to the Wing and Aylesbury road whence we may quickly make a short detour to Wingrave. The church here is the principal attraction. It contains much to delay us. There is, for example, a rhyming record of a charity in one of the aisles :—

As day doth pass from houre to houre
Man's life doth fade awaye
Let every man relieve the poor
Whilest he on Earth doth staye
Sir Richard Goddard who is dead
And laid within the ground
Unto the Poore of Wingrave
Hath given twenty pound

The yearly profit of which stocke
The poore must haue full sure
And eke the same from time to time
For ever to endure.

Sir Richard Goddard's charity still obtains, and is now managed by the Parish Council. There is an oak chest in the vestry dated 1684. But the greatest interest of Wingrave lies in the custom of scattering hay or grass in the church the first Sunday after St. Peter's day in each year. This custom is still carefully observed, and there is a large congregation. The subject is one that might inspire a latter-day novelist or even a journalist. It had its origin in the fact that an old lady who had lost her way on a wintry night found it again by hearing the church bells ring, and therefore she left a meadow to endow the quaint custom in question. William Wooley, who was vicar here from 1753 to 1783, was a great witch-hunter in years when the belief in witchcraft was happily dying out. It is related that during his incumbency Susanna Hannokes, an inoffensive old woman, was accused by one of her neighbours of bewitching her spinning-wheel, so that the owner could not make it go round. This the accuser and her husband insisted upon attesting on oath before a magistrate. The accused was conducted to the church, stripped of her clothes, even to her shift, and was weighed on a pair of scales, against the Church Bible; but to the great mortification of her accusers she passed the ordeal triumphantly, outweighed the Bible, and was thereupon acquitted of the charge against her.¹ The church is about 800 years old, as is also the font, but the former has obviously been too much restored.

We return to the high road to Aylesbury but branch off again very soon for a short distance when we are three miles from Aylesbury to visit Hulcott, a singularly pretty village where the church faces a green, bordered by a Manor House and occasional pleasant dwellings. The church has associa-

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. xxix, p. 93.

tions with some of the Lee family—a family that we have met at Hartwell and Quarendon. One Benedict Lee, by his will in 1545, directed his body to be buried in “Our lady’s ile in the church of Hulcote.” The tomb still remains—an altar-tomb, covered by an alabaster slab from which the brasses have been removed. That they were taken long since is proved by the fact that in the seventeenth century when Browne Willis wrote his book, the armorial bearings alone were there. Hulcott’s only modern association is with William Morgan, an uncle of Charlotte Brontë’s, who performed the ceremony of marriage that made her father and mother man and wife. He was rector here from 1851 to 1856. He married a cousin of Charlotte Brontë’s mother, and was married by Mr. Brontë on the same day that Mr. Morgan officiated at his marriage to Miss Branwell. Before he removed into Buckinghamshire he had married again, and this second wife accompanied him to Hulcott, where she lies buried in the church. He wrote a short memoir of his second wife entitled *Simplicity and Godly sincerity exemplified in the Life and Death of Mrs. Morgan at Hulcott*. There is no sign of a tomb or a tablet to the Morgans, although the present rector has discovered for us in the registers the record of Mrs. Morgan’s death at Hulcott, which runs as follows: “Mary Alice Morgan, wife of Rev. Wm. Morgan, died 28 May, 1852, aged 62 years.” It seems probable that Mr. Morgan married a third time and went to live elsewhere than at Hulcott during his last two years of life. He died in 1858—where, we do not know.

Back once more on the Aylesbury road we are soon at Bierton, our last stoppage, well-nigh on the borders of the town. Roman remains have been found here, including coins of the emperors who reigned in Britain. Relics also have been unearthed that recall the Civil War of Charles the First’s time. When Aylesbury was held for the Parliament, Bierton was loyal to the king. Its vicar, Joseph Bird, was sequestered for supporting the Royalist side. Another vicar of Bierton was

Timothy Shaw, whose son, George Shaw, born in Bierton, became a distinguished naturalist in his day and Principal Keeper of Natural History in the British Museum. He died in 1813. His father Timothy Shaw was so indefatigable in preaching, not only at Bierton but in sundry adjoining parishes that he obtained the title of "The Angel of the Seven Churches." The most interesting monument in Bierton Church is one to Samuel Bone, who died in 1616, and Cicely his wife. It is an elaborate tomb in many-coloured marbles, on which he and his wife are kneeling, four sons behind him, three daughters behind his wife. Six infants in cradles with pillows under their heads are in the recess. A tablet reminds us that the father of Sir Henry Layard of Nineveh fame is buried here.

CHAPTER X

WENDOVER AND THE KIMBLES

WE leave Aylesbury with reluctance, taking the high road to London, stopping, however, at Wendover, five miles on our journey. At Wendover we come in sight of the Chiltern Hills. Many a traveller in the past has made Wendover a centre for becoming acquainted with some of the most picturesque and interesting spots in the county. For such a purpose the Red Lion at Wendover offers special attractions. Apart from the fact that it is very comfortable, it invites some of us by virtue of the circumstance that Robert Louis Stevenson stayed here and wrote about it. Stevenson approached it from High Wycombe walking, knapsack on back¹ through beech woods to Great Missenden. That was in 1875 but you may do much the same to-day. He slept at the Buckingham Arms in that village, and the next morning, instead of taking the high road to Wendover, he reached that place by climbing up towards the church and following the road by Lee and Lee Common to Wendover, skirting beech woods. The reader will find it hard to discover the farmstead "with the beech-woods growing almost to the door of it" and more than a score of peacocks feeding on the little open lawn. More than thirty years have passed,

¹ See *An Autumn Effect*, by R. L. S. *The Works of R. L. Stevenson*, Vol. XX. *Pentland Edition*.

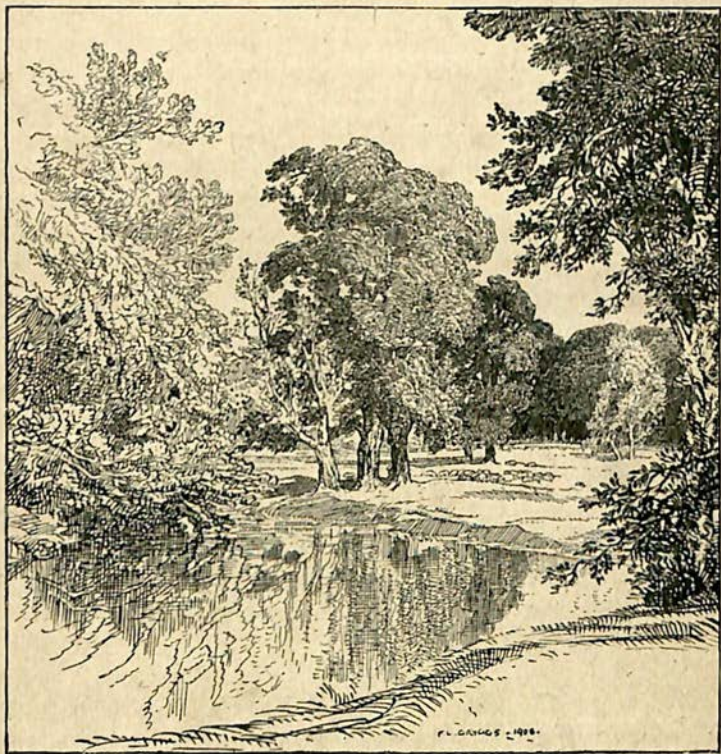
and Peacock Farm, it is to be feared, has disappeared in the interval. In any case this hill walk is by far the pleasanter to take from Wendover to Great Missenden or the reverse way. You will give a short time to Lee, or The Lee as it is usually called. The eleventh century church, originally a chapel of ease to Weston Turville, was subsequently granted to Missenden Abbey, and served by its canons. Following the dissolution its first minister was a monk of Missenden, to whom was assigned an income of £8 per annum. The Norman font has recently been restored to its original position. In the east window are some interesting remains of fourteenth century stained glass. In connection with The Lee it is recorded in the "Monasticon" that in the reign of Edward the Third Ralph Mareschall, Abbot of Missenden, was "convicted of traitorously and feloniously falsifying and clipping the King's coin, viz. grats and sterlings, at his manor called Legh, near Missenden, and sentenced to be drawn and hanged." At the inn at Wendover they will still show you Stevenson's signature in the visitors' book. The inn has been much enlarged but it still retains some of the features that attracted Stevenson :—

I never saw any room much more to be admired than the low wainscoted parlour in which I spent the remainder of the evening. It was a short oblong in shape, save that the fireplace was built across one of the angles so as to cut it partially off, and the opposite angle was similarly truncated by a corner cupboard. The wainscot was white, . . . the fashion was old-fashioned and stiff. Everything was in keeping, down to the ponderous leaden inkstand on the round table.

The inn must always retain a pleasant fragrance of that visit, recalled in such admirable prose.

The greater number of visitors to Wendover will approach it, however, not from Aylesbury nor from High Wycombe, but by the quick train service of the Great Central Railway. It is but an hour's journey from London. We pass through Harrow and Rickmansworth, crossing the frontier into Buckinghamshire directly we pass Chorley Wood Station. We then see Chalfont,

Road, where we alight for the two Chalfonts, Amersham, and Little Missenden, from the line. After Great Missenden comes Wendover, where we leave the train. It so chances that we are approaching London from the opposite way. Here at Wendover



Wendover.

we see as we alight from the station to our right on Coombe Hill, the memorial to the soldiers who fell in the Boer War, unveiled in 1904. There are 148 names inscribed upon it. Straight before us is the High Street of the little town, at the end of which is the market-house erected in its

present form in 1870. Stevenson, who describes Wendover as a "straggling, purposeless sort of place," scarcely does justice to this pleasant street with the clock-tower in the distance. Leland three centuries ago described it as "a pretty thorough-fayre town, havinge 2 streets well builded with tymbre." We walk towards the market house, passing the Red Lion on our right. Its landlord is, as we write, the same as when, thirty years ago, Stevenson visited it, and the landlord's daughter, then a child with two dolls under her arm, assists her father in all social effort. At the end of the street we find the church down a lane to our right. A very pretty lane is this with a stream running on one side of it. We come straight into the churchyard and visit the church. This church was to have been built nearer the town, but tradition has it that when the building was begun the material was all carried away by witches or fairies and deposited on the spot that the church now occupies. Hence the field where it was to have been is still called Witchell Meadow. In the church the most interesting tomb is that to William Bradshawe and Alice his Wyffe. Their effigies are in brass, as are also their nine children all kneeling, and the Christian names of their twenty-three grandchildren are given, surely the quaintest genealogical tree to be found in any church. One other tomb has a lengthy epitaph to Henry Bradshawe, who died in 1674. This epitaph almost anticipates the verse of George Crabbe :—

Three things he priz'd contemning earthly pelf,
To God, his duty, neighbour, and himself.
His Charity was great, his Mercy good
He cloath'd the naked, gave the hungry food.
The Tomb's no grave unto the just
But a receptacle of their dust.

Wendover although it had only a population of 1400 in 1801— it has 2000 to-day—had long the right of sending two members to Parliament. One of these members, for a critical period in the history of our country was John Hampden, who was first

elected for Wendover in 1623 when James the First was on the throne. The Hampden family, which long owned the manor of Wendover, represented the town at intervals up to the reign of George the Second. Another member for the borough was Richard Grenville, another Sir Richard Steele, who was member in 1722; another was Edmund Burke, who sat for Wendover from 1765 to 1774. George Canning and General Canning were also members for this borough. Hampden and Burke appear more prominently in our pages elsewhere. Steele one recalls by this one slight association with the county. In the same year he produced at Drury Lane his comedy *The Conscious Lovers*. He died at Carmarthen in 1729. Lipscomb, who is frequently inaccurate, associates Dean Colet, the founder of St. Paul's school, with Wendover, but Colet's biographers say that he was "probably" born in London. The Colet family in any case, was associated with Wendover, and he may have been born here. We are more certain of one of the first of English historians, Roger of Wendover, who wrote the Chronicles of King Henry the Third's reign, and Richard de Wendover, who was Bishop of Rochester in that reign. "This Roger," says Fuller, "began his Chronicle at the Conquest and continued it to the year 1235, being the nineteenth year of King Henry the Third."

Leaving Wendover at the road which leads us, after a four mile walk, to Great Missenden, we shall pass on our left a house known as Dutchlands, in the grounds of which, in 1848, was found a valuable gold armlet of British or Saxon workmanship, now in the British Museum. On our right is a road leading to Scrubwood through fields, and also, if we so desire it, to the "Fox" Inn with its pleasant tea-gardens. Thence we may get down into Great Missenden, or make our way to Little Hampden and Great Hampden. Perhaps before seeing this last memorable spot we should visit the two Kimbles, and we may if we choose do a ramble through what I call the Hampden County before dropping down into Great Missenden

and the high road to London, by a quite other route. This we may do by crossing the railway bridge at Wendover and following the Upper Icknield Street to Ellesborough. On the way we cross a road which leads northwards to Stoke Mandeville and southwards to Chequers Court. Let us go to Stoke Mandeville first. It has a station on the Great Central between Wendover and Aylesbury, but is not on the road between those towns. We may miss it without much loss. The church is half a mile from the village. It has little to interest us. Some foundations have been unearthed which seem to prove that the village was once much nearer the church. Turning back and walking southward we go either to Ellesborough or Little Kimble. The church at Ellesborough is splendidly situated on a hill and its tower can be seen at a great distance. We first note the crucifix in the churchyard,—a fine monument which recalls the old churchyard crosses. It was erected in 1897 “to the sacred memory of all those whose bodies lie in this churchyard and whose souls are in Christ.” Near by is a new tomb, a Celtic cross, but recently erected to Sir John Lawson Walton, Attorney-General from 1905 to 1908. He had a house near here, where he died. Also in the churchyard may be found the grave of Thomas Edwards of Terrick in this parish. Edwards figures in Nicholls’s *Literary Anecdotes* from his quarrel with Bishop Warburton. This quarrel is elaborated in his work entitled *Canons of Criticism*. He died in 1757 on a visit to Samuel Richardson the novelist. In the church there is a fine marble monument to Brigetta Croke. There is a figure of St. Peter in a niche in the aisle. Some of the Russells of Chequers Court are buried here and one of their descendants is vicar of the parish at the time we write.

We continue along the Upper Icknield Way from Ellesborough to Little Kimble, where we see the tiniest of churches on the roadside at the corner of the Aylesbury, the Ellesborough, and the Kimble roads. We note a pretty bridge on one side and a picturesque house on the other. In Little

Kimble churchyard we find a monument to Stephen Quartermaine, who died in 1831 and was, as his tomb informs us, a "descendant of the ancient family of Quartremains of Oxfordshire once the possessors of Sherborne Castle." There are no interesting tombs in the church, but there are some mural paintings, one representing the figure of a crowned king, probably of Edward the First, another the story of St. George, and another St. Francis preaching to the birds. In the churchyard at the corner note the two elm trees grown together in a curious fashion.

Another mile on our journey we are at Great Kimble, the intervening road being known as the Happy Valley. The inn at Great Kimble is as efficient as the Red Lion at Wendover and is a delightful spot for a week-end visit. The view from the pleasant garden of the Bernard Arms with its sign of the Bear and Cross is a particularly fine one. The Church is exactly opposite the inn, and we see also a fine creeper-covered house. The church is of profound interest to every lover of liberty, for it was here that the foundations of the protest against ship-money were laid. Anyone, however, who sits in this quiet church to-day and calls to mind the meeting held here in 1635 to assess the ship-money has to make a considerable allowance for the change of structure. "The building," Lipscomb tells us, "has undergone great alterations and has been almost entirely rebuilt." Nevertheless, here we shall recall Carlyle's words in his *Cromwell Letters* :—

Two obscure individuals, "Peter Aldridge and Thomas Lave, Assessors of Ship Money" over in Buckinghamshire, had assembled a Parish Meeting in the Church of Great Kimble, to assess and rate the Ship Money of the said Parish : there in the cold weather, at the foot of the Chiltern Hills, "11th January, 1635," the Parish did attend, 'John Hampden, Esquire, at the head of them, and by a Petition still extant, refused to pay the same, or any part thereof,—witness the above "Assessors," also the parish Constables whom we remit from such unexpected celebrity. John Hampden's share for this Parish is twenty-one shillings and sixpence ; for another Parish it is twenty shillings ; on which latter sum, not the former, John Hampden was tried.

Sir Peter Temple of Stoke, High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire, was the authority with whom this petition was lodged and he was shortly brought to account by the Crown for the arrears of ship-money which he found it so difficult to collect. It was not at all wonderful Sir Peter should have had difficulties in any case, for this writ authorising the collection of 'ship-money' nominally for the supplying of ships for the protection of the country, actually for quite other purposes, would clearly be less acceptable in an inland county, and Lord Nugent remarks that the places included in the writ that Hampden defied are "most equidistant from the four seas which surround the island." Be this as it may, the quarrel grew apace. A writ was issued against Hampden as the principal opponent of ship-money. The case stated was as regards an assessment of twenty shillings charged upon him in respect of his lands in the Parish of Stoke adjoining to Great Kimble. We recall Burke, who in his speech on the taxation of the American colonists said :—

"Would twenty shillings have ruined Mr. Hampden's fortune? No. But the payment of half twenty shillings, on the principle it was demanded, would have made him a slave."

After much legal disputation in the Court of Exchequer judgment was given for the Crown and against Hampden, but Clarendon has admitted that the decision "proved of more advantage and credit to the gentleman condemned, than to the king's service." It is worthy of note that one of the bells in Great Kimble church tower is inscribed "HONOUR GOD, 1635," and was thus erected about the time that Hampden and his friends were protesting.

But we must leave John Hampden, returning to the career of that great patriot when we visit his house and his burial-place some three miles away. There is little else to detain us at the Kimbles. The name recalls the Cymbeline of Shakspeare, otherwise Cunobeline, and a camp with deep ditches on the east and south, now not traceable, is commonly called

after Cymbeline, while near by is a hill known as Cymbeline's Mount. Only one of the long line of vicars associated with Great Kimble is dwelt upon at any length by the always comprehensive Lipscomb. This is George Surnnock, who was presented to the living by John Hampden's son Richard in 1660. His Nonconformist tendencies soon produced his ejection, but he wrote a multitude of sermons and treatises during the after years. His sermon entitled *The Pastor's Farewell. A Valedictory Sermon Preached at Great Kimble, 1662*, is still treasured by collectors of Buckinghamshire pamphlets. In the church we naturally linger, in spite of its many changes. We note the beautiful font on its pedestal, more elaborate than most, and we observe the banner to St. Nicholas over the reading desk, the painting of the Crucifixion over the pulpit, and another painting in the aisle. In 1876 Mrs. Frankland Russell Astley, then residing at Chequers Court, rebuilt and restored much even that Lipscomb had seen and described. There is some fresco work over the arch of the chancel.

CHAPTER XI

CHEQUERS COURT AND HAMPDEN HOUSE

AT Great Kimble we find one of the lodge gates of that interesting mansion of many historical associations known as Chequers Court. The house belongs to the family of Astley, inheritors through the female line of the Russells of Chequers Court. The Astley family have long ceased to live here, and the mansion, with its fine collection of Cromwell portraits and relics and mementos of the Stuart period generally, has of late years passed from tenant to tenant. The present possessor is Mr. A. H. Lee, now (1910) M.P. for the Fareham Division of Hampshire. Mr. Lee is spending money lavishly in beautifying and restoring the mansion, but the Cromwellian relics are no longer there. They have been described again and again.¹ But in view of the fact that the house is at present denuded of relics, a description loses point. In Lord Morley's *Life of Cromwell* will be found reproductions of many of the portraits. Mr. Gladstone once visited the house with a friend, not failing to denounce Cromwell to his companion the while, mainly as an enemy of the Established Church. Mr. Gladstone, however, was mollified by a sight of the Lord Protector's christening robes, which in those days were shown to the visitor, together with Cromwell's watch and sword, a

¹ See *Memorials of Old Buckinghamshire* and *Penn's County and other Buckinghamshire Sketches* for separate essays.

portrait of him at two years of age, and the Deed by which Richard Cromwell dissolved Parliament. The presence until quite recently of all these relics of Cromwell at Chequers Court does not imply any personal association of that great man with the house. The story of these personal treasures takes us back, however, to the year 1657, when Cromwell was at the height of his power. The Earl of Warwick of that day wanted Cromwell's daughter Frances for his grandson, Robert Rich. Cromwell hesitated as to settlements, but the young couple loved one another, and would not wait. Finally Cromwell gave way. Frances Cromwell was but seventeen years of age at the time of her first marriage. Robert Rich died a few months later. In 1666 Frances Rich married again, this time Sir John Russell, of Chippenham. By him she had three sons and a daughter, and then Sir John died at the age of thirty-two. Frances remained a widow, and lived until 1721, dying at the age of eighty-two.

If we may not think of Cromwell in personal connection with Chequers Court, neither may we think of his daughter Frances. It was by the marriage of Lady Russell's grandson Colonel Charles Russell with Joanna Revell that Chequers Court came into the Russell family, for Joanna was heiress of the Croke family to whom it had belonged. It was Colonel Russell, then, Cromwell's great-grandson, who brought all these interesting treasures into the house from which they have, let us hope, only temporarily been removed.

It is only two miles from Chequers to Hampden House, which still retains some suggestions of Cromwell as well as of John Hampden, in whose family it remains to this day, and with whose noble name it will ever be associated. If we had approached Great Hampden, which for us means Hampden House, from the opposite side, that is from Great Missenden, we should have taken the turning just beyond the road leading up to Great Missenden station. It runs at right angles to the road to Aylesbury which we see winding in the distance as we cross the

bridge over the railway. A finger post tells us that we are three miles from Hampden, seven miles from Princes Risborough and thirteen from Thame. We see Sir Felix Semon's new house on our right. A little further, at a bend where a narrow lane runs on our right to Wendover, there was until two or three years ago the hollow stump of a tree known for untold years as the King's Beech. It was burned to a stump in 1897, and has now quite disappeared. Tradition has it that under this tree King Edward the Third and his son the Black Prince rested and administered justice when on their way to visit the Hampden of that day, whose mansion is a mile further on. It was on this visit, so the story goes, that the Black Prince and a younger Hampden quarrelled when playing tennis. The rest of the story is contained in the famous lines on "Tring, Wing and Ivinghoe" which we have already quoted.¹ As it is absolutely certain that the Hampden family never owned these manors, that part of an ancient story has to be dismissed as legendary.

We are not long in coming to yet another legend, for a little further on the road we find two quaint lodge-gates known in the district as the pepper-boxes. These are at the almost disused entrance to Hampden House, which we see in the distance through the fine avenue of trees. It is said that Queen Elizabeth, when visiting Griffith Hampden, remarked that the view from her windows was obscured by the trees and that when she awoke in the morning these trees had disappeared, her obliging host having had them cleared away in the night. This story is told of at least a dozen mansions in different parts of England and never seems to be accepted by the representatives of the many ancient families to which it refers as reflecting upon the snobbery of their ancestors. It never had less an air of reality than here, as no particular view was gained by cutting down the trees. It is so much more probable that in one of the many structural alterations of the house, and doubtless

¹ See page 98.

in the great structural alterations of the eighteenth century, it was found convenient to change the original method of approach to the mansion. In any case, this must not be confused with the Queen's Gap, which is a path that was made by Griffith Hampden upon his estate to facilitate Queen Elizabeth's journey from Oxford. Where the bank of Grimms Dyke crossed the park, the mound was thrown into the ditch and the change may be seen at this day. It is, however, on quite private land. This is a digression. We must continue on the high road a little longer and take a turning to the left where there is a sign post that says "Hampden one mile." We pass through a pleasant glade of trees which might if we went straight on take us up to Prestwood. We, however, turn sharp round to the right and following along this delightful glade come at the top of it to a roadway where through a gate we are at Hampden House and church. Village there is none. We have to walk across a field to find the cottage where the key of the church is kept. The population, which was just over two hundred at the census of 1901, is scattered in cottages over a wide area. The church and manor-house, however, which stand almost side by side, give us plenty to occupy our time.

But first let us recall the hero to do homage to whom is the principal cause of our visit here. John Hampden is believed to have been born in London in 1594. There is one tradition that he was born at Hoggston in this county, but there is apparently no register of his birth, although there is no doubt of his ancient lineage, nor of the fact that Oliver Cromwell and Sir Edmund Waller were his cousins. His ancestor Griffith Hampden, as we have seen, was visited by Elizabeth. John attended the Grammar School of Thame, which may still be seen some little distance from the road as we pass through that busy town. He was at Magdalen College, Oxford, and in 1619 he married Elizabeth Symeon in the church of Pyrton, Oxfordshire. He was several times returned to Parliament for Wendover, and later for Buckinghamshire, and his association

with this county is intimate indeed. In 1634 he lost his wife, and a long inscription by him in this church of Great Hampden reads that she was "truly virtuous and pious," and that she was the mother of "nine hopefull children." It was not until after this loss that Hampden's national fame began. His protest against the payment of ship-money in Great Kimble church has already been recorded. This was on the 25th of January, 1635-6. From that day forward all lovers of liberty turned to him, and the title of "the Patriot" has been conceded even by his enemies. "The eyes of all men," says Lord Clarendon—one of these last, "were fixed upon him as their Pater Patriæ, and the pilot who must steer the vessel through the tempests and rocks that threaten it." The more arbitrary Wentworth did indeed say, however, that he wished "Mr. Hampden, and others to his likeness, were well whipped into their right senses."

The succeeding years belong rather to England than to Buckinghamshire, and particularly Hampden's parliamentary struggles. When the war began, it was somewhat different. Lord Nugent remarks that Hampden had obtained in early life, from the habits of the chase, a thorough knowledge of the passes of these Chiltern Hills, and it was natural that when the King fixed his Court at Oxford and Prince Rupert overran the neighbourhood, Hampden should be doing noble service in the field in his native county. In many of the skirmishes that took place near Aylesbury he was concerned, although not in that in which Lord Wentworth, son of the Earl of Strafford, came by Thame to menace Aylesbury and Wycombe, and was repulsed near the latter town. We find Hampden busy, however, in 1643, when Prince Rupert appeared with 6,000 men at Stoke, two miles from Aylesbury, but had to retreat to Brill. A cheerful episode in this melancholy struggle is that told of the Parliament's soldiers who devoured the apple pies which the wife of the vicar of Wendover had prepared for Prince Rupert's men. At last we come to

the final tragedy when, on Chalgrove Field, Hampden stood up to Prince Rupert in a battle amid the standing corn and received his death wound. The Earl of Essex arrived too late to pursue Rupert's troops, which retreated to Oxford. The nature of Hampden's wound is disputed, and almost every circumstance concerning his death and burial is a subject of controversy. It is not clear whether he was killed by two carbine balls which struck him in the shoulder, or whether his pistol exploded and shattered his arm. The latter is now the more accepted story. In any case we know that the patriot left the field of battle in agony. It is said that he tried to turn aside to the early home of his first wife, Elizabeth Symeon at Pyrton, but that Rupert's cavalry were between him and that place. Then he set his face homeward—to the house at Hampden that he had scarcely entered since his marriage to Letitia Vachell, only two years before. At Thame he was taken from his horse almost fainting, and was carried to the house of one Ezekiel Browne, where he shortly afterwards died. They will still show you the house in Thame, down an archway, at the back of a tradesman's shop, where the great Hampden breathed his last. The story of his last words was probably invented afterwards :—

O Lord save my bleeding country. Have these realms in Thy special keeping. Confound and level in the dust those who would rob the people of their liberty and lawful prerogative. Let the King see his error and turn the hearts of his wicked Counsellors from the malice and wickedness of their designs. . . . O Lord save my country.

That savours of the platform rather than of the death-bed, and we do not accept it as genuine. There is no reason, however, to distrust, as some have done, the account of his funeral, as presented by Lord Nugent upon the authority of *The Kingdome's Weekly Intelligencer* of July, 1643.

All the troops that could be spared from the quarters round joined to escort the honoured corpse to its last resting place, once his beloved abode, among the hills and woods of the Chilterns. They followed him

to his grave in the Parish Church close adjoining his mansion, their arms reversed, their drums and ensigns muffled, and their heads uncovered. Thus they marched, singing the 90th Psalm as they proceeded to the funeral, and the 43rd as they returned.

Our first impression upon entering Great Hampden church is one of disappointment. We look in vain for John Hampden's tomb, which so usually accurate a scholar as Mr. C. H. Firth has told us is there.¹ Twice, indeed, in the church do we find the name of John Hampden "the Patriot," firstly, on the tomb that he himself erected to his wife Elizabeth, and secondly, on an ornate monument to "John Hampden," who died unmarried in 1754, leaving his estates to his kinsman, Robert Trevor, first Viscount Hampden. This grateful heir erected a monument which the modern enthusiast will think was dedicated to the wrong John. It contains a curious genealogical tree and a relief of the battle of Chalgrove Field. It shows the connection of the Trevors with the Hampdens through "Ruth, daughter of John Hampden, slain at Chalgrove Field." But in no sense is it a monument to the patriot. Not even his grave is really known. It bears no inscription; and indeed the precise spot it will never be possible now to discover. When in 1828 some repairs were going on in this church, Lord Nugent, afterwards Hampden's biographer, asked and obtained the then Lord Buckinghamshire's permission to examine Hampden's grave. He was accompanied by Lord Denman and other friends. Lord Nugent afterwards came to the conclusion that the skeleton that they then looked upon was not that of Hampden. Several coffins were inspected but not opened; because they bore dates that disproved the idea that they contained Hampden's ashes. One was opened that bore neither date nor inscription. Was this Hampden? In any case it offered no solution of the problem as to whether the

¹ *Dictionary of National Biography*. Vol. XXIV, page 261.

Patriot had died from a shot received in his shoulder or from an accident. Here we may leave the matter, comfortable in the idea that the great Hampden's ashes were not disturbed by his too zealous admirers, and with the hope that no similar research will be made in the future. Our own opinion as to why the remains were not found is that they had been buried, as would not be unusual in time of war, without a coffin of any kind, and that they had long crumbled into dust.

There is a window in the church to the memory of Hampden; we hope some day that there will be a bust of him—there is one in the adjoining school-room—containing some such inscription as may be read over his bust at Stowe:—
With great courage, and consummate abilities, he began a noble opposition to an arbitrary Court, in defence of the liberties of his country; supported them in Parliament, and died for them in the field.

We turn now to the house, associated so long and so intimately with our hero. Only a fragment of it is seventeenth century work. The larger part is palpably of the eighteenth century, with Adam ceilings and fire-places. We are most interested in the large hall, and what is known as the "brick parlour," which are two rooms indisputably of Hampden's period. In this brick parlour, tradition has it that Hampden received the Commissioners sent to arrest him. Here we see the helmet that was carried on his bier, and a silver chalice cup which bears the inscription:—

"From this cup John Hampden received the Communion Wine at the hands of Robert Lenthall Rector of Hampden."

The room also contains a fine portrait of Hampden and a family Bible which gives a number of entries of the Hampdens and the Cromwells—collaterals of Oliver Cromwell. We see the signature of Elizabeth Cromwell, John Hampden's mother, among many Cromwells and Hampdens

in the opening pages of this most interesting book. In the hall there is another portrait of the Patriot over the mantelpiece, and on the other side of the room a full-length portrait of Cromwell. Near this is a portrait of Richard Hampden, who, after losing his money in the South Sea Bubble, cut his throat in this very house. There is also a portrait of Sir Kenelm Digby, presumed to be by Vandyk. The greater number of the canvases in the hall are, however, of Court beauties of Charles the Second's reign, presumed to be by Sir Peter Lely or by some of his pupils. They were for two centuries in what was known as the Beauty Room, now converted into a bedroom. One of the beauties is a replica of a portrait at Hartwell Hall, said to be by Vandyk, and to represent a lady who was the mistress of Peter Paul Rubens. Leaving the hall we are in regions that have nothing to do with John Hampden. The dining-room stands on the site of what was Queen Elizabeth's bedroom when she visited Griffith Hampden. It is decorated with a fine Japanese paper brought here in 1740 and showing the singular durability which we have noted in the bird wall-paper at Hartwell. On the staircase are many other portraits, including Mary Queen of Scots, Mary the First of England, and Queen Elizabeth before she came to the throne. The library contains a portrait of Griffith Hampden, who represented Buckinghamshire in Parliament in 1585, and a framed copy of Magna Charta, which has a significant place in this house. On the wall is a small picture given to his neighbour by Louis the Eighteenth when he was at Hartwell. Lastly, as we are leaving, we observe an old bell from Hampden church dated 1625, which must have tolled at Hampden's funeral.

Returning to the Thame road we may make our way for about a mile up a side road to the left on our way back to Great Missenden, and there we come to the tiny village of Little Hampden, of which the church is still entitled to the

description given by Lipscomb of a "mean edifice." It is pleasantly situated, however, in sight of wood and common. It is a simple structure without a tower. There is no pulpit and there are no monuments. One small fragment of sculptured stone has been preserved in the wall near the altar. There are some interesting remains of crude frescoes on the walls, one portion of which is preserved under glass. These were brought to light in 1907. They represent scenes in the life of St. Christopher. It would seem, however, that some artistically inclined priest in the fifteenth century painted over some of the pictures of the saint a representation of the Great Day of Judgment. An effigy of St. Christopher on the walls of a church gave those who looked upon it immunity from sudden death on St. Christopher's Day.

CHAPTER XII

GREAT MISSENDEN AND THE RISBOROUGHES

THIS book is written in a cottage in the Chilterns which looks down upon the red roofs of the village of Great Missenden. To the right are woods of beech trees stretching nearly all the three miles to Great Hampden, broken only by the village of Prestwood. In one direction, seven miles away, we reach High Wycombe, and we may pass, as Stevenson did, through a fragrant pine-wood that takes us on our journey to Hughenden and thence to the famous county town.

Amersham, is five miles away in one direction, Wendover four miles in another. Passing through Prestwood we may skirt Hampden and reach Princes Risborough, and this is the journey we shall take to-day. Between this house and the village the station of the Great Central Railway lies below us. Hence every day in the summer a wagonette conveys the tourists of a day on a journey which includes Hampden and Princes Risborough—a journey which discloses some of the prettiest scenery in the Chiltern Hills. Beyond the village, on the opposite hill, for Great Missenden lies in a valley, we see the church peeping out among trees and below it the abbey with a fine row of elm-trees, from which the rooks frequently invade our garden. The Missenden of to-day has no history worth recording; the Missenden of former days centred round

its abbey. In the valley and on the opposing hills you may frequently come across pieces of Gothic architecture which call to mind the days when the Black Monks of Missenden Abbey dominated the country.

Prestwood or priest-wood clearly suggests their domination, and more than one church fairly remote was officered by the monks. These included Lee on the one side and Great Kimble on the other. Leland, writing of Missenden as it was in the reign of Henry the Eighth, remarks that it is "a praty Thoroughfare, but no Markett-Towne. There is a praty Chappell of bricke in the south part of it, and a little by south within the town was a Priory of Black Cannons." The abbey was founded by William de Missenden in 1133, and there was a succession of abbots from that day until, in 1539, John Ottwell, the last abbot, surrendered his convent to the visitors of Henry the Eighth for a pension of £50 a year. One of the monks, Thomas Barnard, received the vicarage of Great Missenden instead of a pension. Few relics of the ancient abbey remain. On its site stands a pleasant mansion near which runs the river Misse, Mease or Misbourne—once no doubt a fine fishing stream, but now quite dry for long periods of time, and at the best not very formidable.

The finest view of the newer abbey is that obtained when we pass through the village and along the road to Amersham. We take a turning through a gate at the end of the abbey walls and find ourselves face to face with the prettiest view that Great Missenden has to offer, at least, when the stream is flowing. We see the abbey from the path across the stream and we follow that path up to the church. Tradition has it that there was once an underground passage connecting the parish church and abbey. This is improbable, as the ancient abbey buildings must have run right up to the church, covering ground that is now pleasant pasture land. There was an abbey church standing where the kitchen gardens now are, but the abbey buildings with the cloisters covered the whole of the slope of the

hill. There are some examples of thirteenth century work in a summer-house of the present abbey. The so-called abbey that we see to-day has gone through many changes of ownership and Lipscomb tells us that it was enlarged and nearly rebuilt by one of these—"an opulent ironmonger in Holborn" named Oldham—in 1787. But let us return to the abbey as it was in the Middle Ages. It is recorded that Hugh de Plessetis, lord of the manor, who died in 1291 and was buried in the church, gave orders that his white palfrey called *Principal* should be buried with him, together with his armour and the horse's harness and this was done, although no memorial commemorates the singular funeral. The Abbey of Missenden received constant visitation before the officials of Henry the Eighth came to weigh it in the balance together with the other religious houses in the land. One abbot of Missenden was deprived by Bishop Grosstête after his visitation in 1236. In 1297 a novice cut his throat here "for fear of discipline." Then came the days when Henry Honor was abbot—the name still obtains in the district—when a "chartulary" was prepared that gave much information to the brethren. It furnished prescriptions which included "oil of black snails" and "marrow of horse bones." That "chartulary" of Great Missenden is a valuable historical document for our time. The abbot, John Fox, who ruled here in 1530 had to face a heavy indictment. Many were the charges made against the monks. One monk named Roger Palmer, "had been seen more than once at midnight coming out of a house in the village in doublet and jerkin, with a sword by his side."¹ What could not a writer of historical fiction do with such material! The life of this quiet village has been curiously transformed in the centuries, although the population is much the same in numbers.

The church itself only repays a visit on account of its view.

¹ *The Victorian History of the Counties of England: Buckinghamshire.* Edited by William Page. Vol. I. Page 374. (Archibald Constable and Company.)

It has been restored and again restored. A few brasses from the floor are upon the walls. One of them is to a Katherine Iwardly, a daughter of Bernard de Missenden. There is a twelfth century font. Browne Willis describes a window in the chancel which has now disappeared. It contained the name of John Ottwell, the last abbot of Missenden. The churchyard is pleasantly situated. Here you may find the tomb of Captain Thomas Backhouse, a retired Indian officer who died at Great Missenden in 1800. He had always declared that he would not lie in the churchyard, but wished to rest, his gun by his side, in his own wood on the hill. Therefore he built for himself a tomb in the shape of a pyramid, and here he reposed for seven years. Then one of his sons came back from abroad and removed his father's coffin to the churchyard. That genial gossip, J. K. Fowler, tells us that, as a boy, he saw the tomb on the hill-side.

Among the "worthies" associated with Great Missenden we may mention James Stephen, who built himself a residence here, on Frith Hill, and died in 1832. Stephen was an eminent lawyer who suggested and arranged the system of the Continental blockade by which we opposed Napoleon. He was made a Master in Chancery. He had two sons, fairly distinguished, in Sir James Stephen and Sir George Stephen, and two more distinguished grandsons in Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir James Fitzjames Stephen. Sir George Stephen, the uncle of Fitzjames and Leslie, wrote two once well-known books, *Adventures of a Gentleman in search of a Horse* and *An Attorney in search of a Practice*. He long resided at Loosley Row, Princes Risborough.

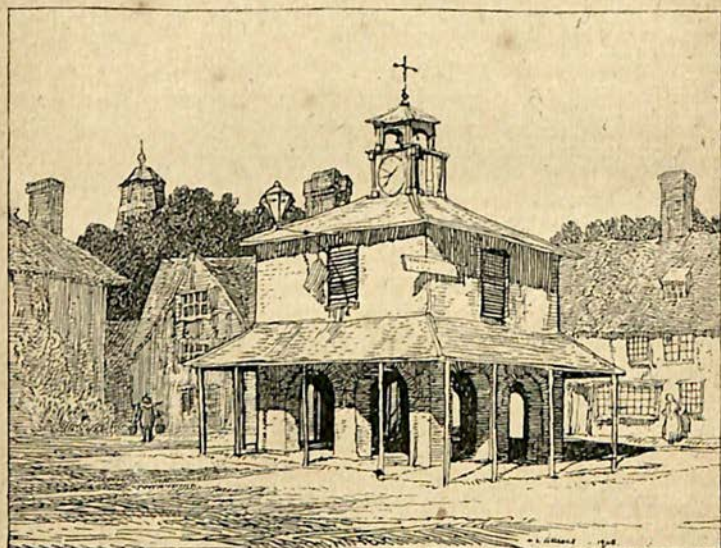
We may return to the high road in two other directions by the road into Church Street past the schools, or by a field-path which brings us out at the other end of the village, near the station. By the latter route we pass a white house at which William Black, the novelist, was a frequent visitor. It was in his lifetime occupied by one of the old family of Honor, who

was his brother-in-law. To reach Princes Risborough we may either take the road past the station or the high-road to Hampden that runs at right angles with the road to Aylesbury. The former is the pleasanter and less frequented route. It takes us up a hill bounded all the way on our left by beech-woods, until we reach the rambling village of Prestwood, of which the very modern church is some distance along a road to our left on the route to High Wycombe. We keep straight on through Prestwood taking a turning to the right for Great Hampden. On our right we see a large stone cross in a field—now part of Honor End Farm—adjoining the road. This was erected by Lord Nugent, and its inscription, which has been disgracefully defaced, tells us that :—

For these lands in Stoke Mandeville John Hampden was assessed in twenty shillings of ship money levied by command of the King without authority of law the of August 1635. By resisting this claim of the King in legal strife he upheld the right of the people under the law and became entitled to their grateful remembrance. His work on earth ended after the conflict on Charlgrove Field the 18th of June, 1643, and he rests in Great Hampden Church.

Instead of passing through the gates that lead to Hampden House and church, we turn to the left and take a road across Hampden Common, one of the most beautiful spots in Buckinghamshire. We note the Hampden Row post-office on our right, and we also note the sign-post to Sheen and Naphill, the former a pretty village without a church, the latter a straggling place developing steadily. Naphill and Naphill Common lie midway between Bradenham and Hughenden, the two places so interestingly associated with Lord Beaconsfield, but we reach these from High Wycombe. If we pass through Lacey Green—with a church built in 1822 and much restored since then—and down a steep road into Princes Risborough we have as fine a view as is afforded anywhere of the famous Grimm's Dyke, an ancient earthwork probably constructed as a defence by the Romans, or it may be as a

separating boundary of the old Saxon Kingdoms. "Grim" was possibly the name of an invading Dane, possibly only derived from grim, a goblin. As we approach Princes Risborough we come upon a less elusive relic in the shape of Whiteleaf Cross, an imposing cross cut out of the hill and preserved by an Inclosure Act of George the Fourth's time. The responsibility for its preservation rests with the owner of the



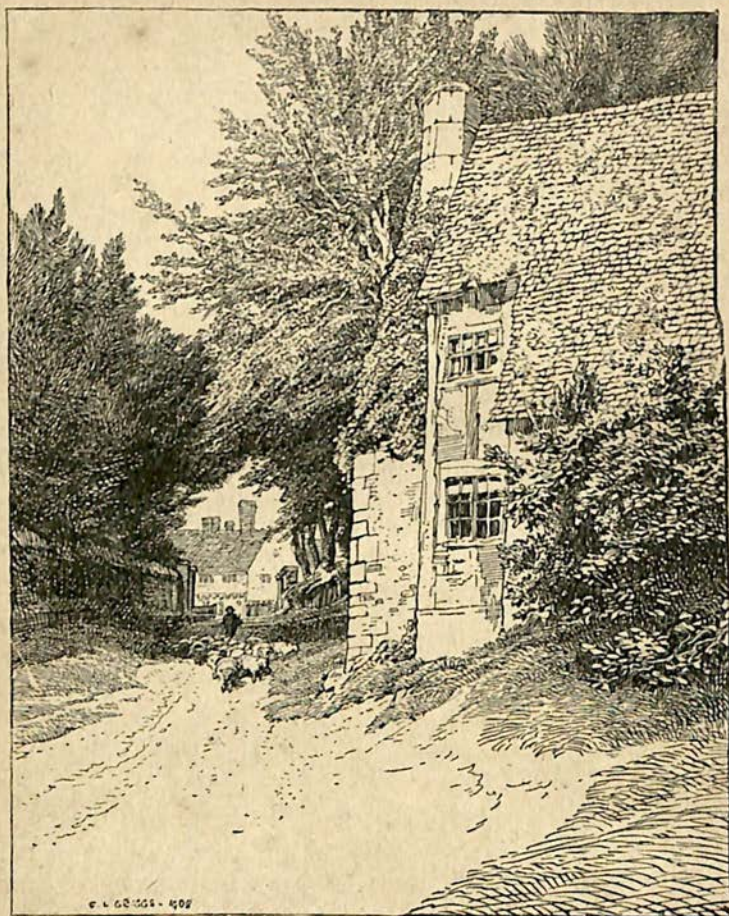
The Market House, Princes Risborough.

Hampden estates. Certainly this cross, which impresses one not at all as one passes down the steep hill by the side of it, and then looks only as if it were some neglected chalk pit, is very imposing from all surrounding places. The stem is eighty feet long and fifty broad, and it is cut two feet deep in the chalk. The latest research declines to associate Whiteleaf Cross with Saxon and Danish battles, and gives it no later date than the Civil War of the seventeenth century. It was probably cut by

the Royalist soldiers as a landmark, and some part of it was doubtless a natural denudation of the chalk.

The cross dominates the little town of Princes Risborough, in which, in another mile's journey we now find ourselves. It owes its name, at least traditionally, to the Black Prince, who is said to have built a palace here. Near the churchyard were once found some trenches, supposed by some to be the site of this palace, by others a Saxon camp. There is a Market House rebuilt in 1824, and near the church many old houses. The church has been restored more even than most in the county, and has thereby lost almost every interest for the lover of the picturesquely-antique. Sir Peter Lely, the famous artist, once lived in Princes Risborough. He was born in Westphalia in 1617, and died in London in 1680. It was his association with Princes Risborough that gave to the county many Lely portraits, notably the collection of Lord Wharton at Wooburn, long since dispersed. At the back of the church is the old vicarage, a picturesque house with tiled roof and timbered walls.

Less than two miles from Princes Risborough we come to Monks Risborough, almost at the foot of the cross. Then we return, for the sake of variety, by Horsenden, Bledlow, and Sanderton through Loosley Road to Great Missenden. Of these places, Monks Risborough is undoubtedly the most interesting. The place derives its name from the monks of Christ Church in Canterbury. In the church you will note the banner to St. Dunstan near the pulpit. We admire the fifteenth-century roof, and, above all, the rood screen with the figures of nine of the apostles painted thereon; the three others were stolen. The apostles are not very well done. They were probably the work of some village artist in the reign of Charles the First or Charles the Second, and have possibly replaced some earlier figures. There is a brass in the floor of the chancel—the effigy of Robert Blundell, who was rector here in 1431. The font is Norman. There are three brasses

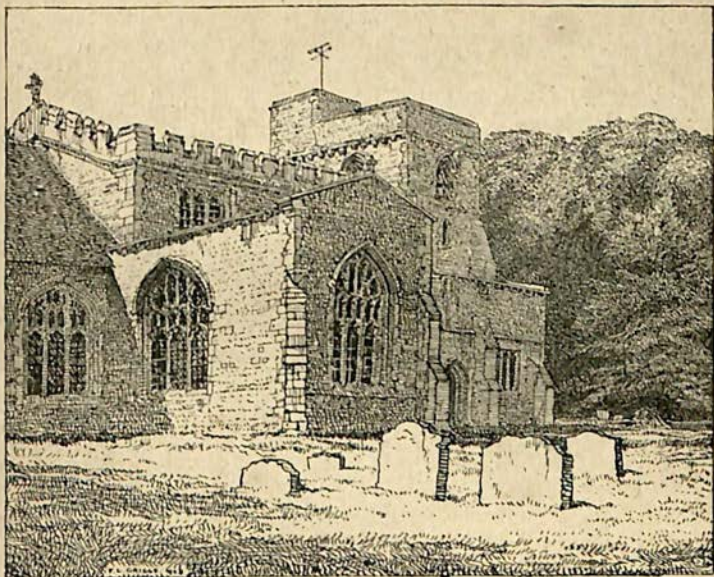


The Old Vicarage, Princes Risborough.

in the floor of the nave and two figures in stone. We see some pre-Reformation glass in one of the windows. But restoration and re-flooring have done damage here, as nearly everywhere we go. Some of the rectors of Monks Risborough,

by the way, have achieved ecclesiastical preferment. Thomas Savage, who was rector here in 1484, became Archbishop of York : George Browne, rector in 1528, Archbishop of Dublin, and Abraham Campion, Dean of Lincoln.

Horsenden, a mile from Princes Risborough on our return journey, has a small, ivy-covered church. A family of the name of Grubb is much in evidence in the church, one John Grubb



Monks Risborough Church.

having rebuilt the tower in 1765. The most notable association of Horsenden is with Sir John Denham, who occupied Horsenden House and garrisoned it for the king during the Civil War. He was attainted by the Parliament, and his estates forfeited, but he came back at the Restoration only to dispose of the estate in 1662 to "John Grubb of Great Kimble." It remained with this family until 1841. Of

Denham we think most to-day as the author of *Cooper's Hill*, with the memorable lines :—

Oh could I flow like thee and make thy stream
My great example, as it is my theme !
Though deep, yet clear ; though gentle, yet not dull ;
Strong without rage, without o'er-flowing full.

Denham's connection with Horsenden, recorded at length by Lipscomb, is ignored by some of his biographers. The most famous of the rectors of Horsenden was Timothy Hall, who was here in 1667. He removed to a London church, and was one of the few clergymen who read James the Second's Declaration from the pulpit in 1688. James made him Bishop of Oxford, "an act egregiously resented by the true sons of the Church." He was consecrated at Lambeth by Sancroft, but when he went to take possession of his see "the Dean and Canons refused to install him, the gentry to meet him, the Vice-Chancellor and heads to take notice of him, or any Master or Bachelor to take Holy Orders from him." He retired to Hackney and died there, miserably poor, in 1690. Lipscomb gives a picture of Horsenden church and manor house, which shows the extraordinary changes of half a century, even in these quiet regions.

From Horsenden we go by two or three cross roads to Bledlow, on the very border of the county, where we almost touch Oxfordshire, and note a sign-post to Chinner, which is in that county, and therefore does not concern us. Bledlow is a particularly charming village. The interior of the church, it is true, offers but little of interest. There is a small brass in the chancel ; there are some slate tombstones of the beginning of the eighteenth century, and there are three or four marble tablets on the walls, but there are no associations of interest. The church has been many times restored, and further restoration is going on at the time we write. There is a holy water font at the entrance under the porch, and a stained glass window erected "by the Bledlow children" in 1897. These memorials

join together ages sufficiently remote. One may note also a battered picture, by one Wale, of Christ being taken down from the Cross, the two Marys and the disciples weeping. This formerly stood above the Communion Table, but is now hanging by itself. Samuel Wale was a commonplace artist who died in 1786. He made his fame by the painting of public-house signs and not a little by a full-length portrait of Shakspeare, which hung near Drury Lane Theatre, and attracted attention by the splendour of its frame. Later in life he became a Royal Academician. Of more interest than Bledlow church is its environment. In the churchyard we see the remains of the old Cross. Along the east side of the churchyard, separating it from a stream called the Lyde, is a path which makes an exceptionally beautiful walk. Its great feature is the number of wonderful witch-elms with their many huge trunks from a single root. The stream furnishes pretty springs of water, and the general effect is delightful. The nearness of the church to the stream has given rise to a proverb in the neighbourhood :—

Whoever liveth and doth abide
Shall see Bledlow Church fall into the Lyde.

We leave Bledlow with reluctance, and return by way of Sanderton, a bewildering place, for the station is two miles from the village, and the village is a straggling one. A pleasant stream of water runs near the church, which has little importance. There are no monuments, and the tablets do not interest us. There is an old font with trefoil decoration. In the vestry is a water-colour drawing of the church as it was in 1861, since which time it has been restored. Returning to Great Missenden through Loosely Road, by an inn called "The Whip," we obtain splendid views.

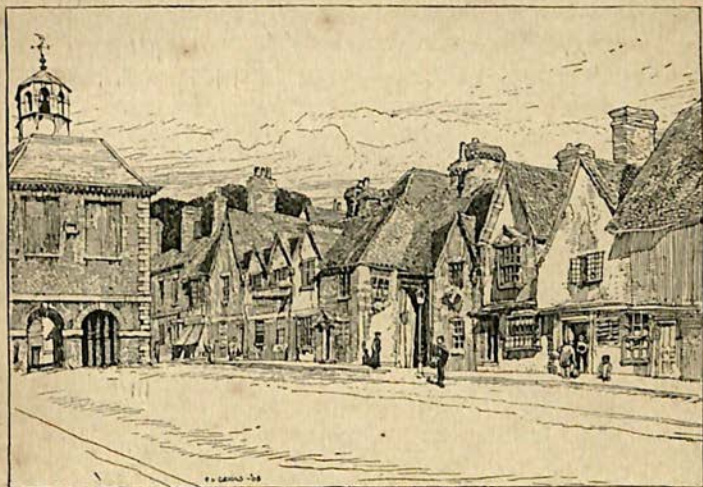
CHAPTER XIII

AMERSHAM AND BEACONSFIELD: THE GRAVE OF EDMUND BURKE

FROM Great Missenden we may walk five miles along the high-road to Amersham, when we are within twenty-five miles of London. A mile and a-half on the way we may turn into a road to the right leading, as a sign-post indicates, to Little Missenden. It is a small village with a very old church, and a Manor House. The church has a markedly ancient air in spite of modern restorations. There is a Norman font and there are a few tombs, but none of special interest. In the Manor House lived for many years the distinguished Dr. Bates, who was one of the members of the famous Hell Fire Club, concerning which he "emphatically and repeatedly declared, that, excepting the excesses to which the convivialities of the table may be supposed to have sometimes elevated such men as John Wilkes, Charles Churchill, and Whitehead . . . , that association was most unjustly stigmatised by some of the scandalous and sarcastic fabrications of its contemporaries." So says Dr. Lipscomb, who apparently knew Dr. Bates, and he adds that "this testimony is the more valuable, as delivered by a gentleman of unimpeachable honour and veracity, at the distance of so many years after the consequence of opposite sentiments could have in any degree affected his reputation." Dr. Bates died in Little Missenden, aged 98. He left a

valuable collection of pictures, which were removed to Stowe after his death, he having presented them to the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos.

We return to the London Road in order to pursue our way to Amersham, and, doing so, we leave a pleasant road through the woods to Chesham on our left. We may if we choose follow a field path on our right, which will take us through the park of Shardeloes, the old-time seat of the Drake family. This



Amersham.

walk, much more picturesque than the high-road, leads us by the side of the ornamental waters of Shardeloes Park and in full view of the house. We are well-nigh at Amersham when this field-path walk is ended. Shardeloes, or Shardloes, has a history. In the reign of Edward the Third it belonged to the Latymers; in the reign of Henry the Sixth to the Brudenells. William Tothill resided here in Queen Elizabeth's reign, and entertained the Queen. Shardeloes came by marriage into the Drake family in James the First's time. Sir William Drake,

who died here in 1690, built the Market Hall at Amersham. The house, which is largely modern work, is still in possession of the Drake family. Its situation is enviable. The lake is charming, and the outlook of woodland is superb. The lake has been artificially formed by the widening of the river Misse, from which Great Missenden takes its name. It is forty acres in extent. In the house are portraits of Queen Elizabeth and of Sir Christopher Hatton, her Chancellor.

We are but a mile from Amersham, formerly called Agmondesham, when we are at Shardeloes. The town consists of one long street, with the Market Hall already mentioned, a substantial church with many interesting associations, some picturesque alms-houses and many examples of half-timbered houses. The railway station is half a mile up the hill to the right when we reach the end of the town. Around the station a new town is growing up, composed largely of villa residences. At present it is called the New Town, but it will probably develop into Amersham-on-the-Hill in emulation of Harrow. We shall tarry a minute at the alms-houses, built in 1617 by Sir William Drake, and note the six simple cottages, each consisting of two small rooms. The inmates, six poor widows of burgesses of the town, as we are informed by Lipscomb, are admitted at fifty years of age, and receive six shillings each per week, two loads of beech wood yearly, and every second year a shift gown. The Amersham free grammar-school is also endowed. Among the members of Parliament for the borough before it was absorbed in a section of the county may be named Sir Edmund Waller and Algernon Sidney,¹ but the name of Drake is of perennial

¹ It will thus be seen that all the great martyrs for liberty in the seventeenth century were associated with Buckinghamshire :—

“Yours are Hampden’s, Russell’s glory,
Sidney’s matchless fame is yours.
Martyrs in heroic story
Worth a thousand Agincourts.”

recurrence in the annals of Amersham politics. In this connection we are told that Amersham had a curious custom.

The inns in the town were taken possession of at election time by the women-folk, old and young, married and unmarried—the two best inns being selected by the lady inhabitants. Here the fair ones awaited the arrival of the newly elected members who formally entered the room and very deliberately and demurely kissed them in turns. This performance concluded, a raid was made into the inn-rooms by the young men of the place, and amid loud laughter and screams and struggles innumerable, they also kissed the not unwilling dames.¹

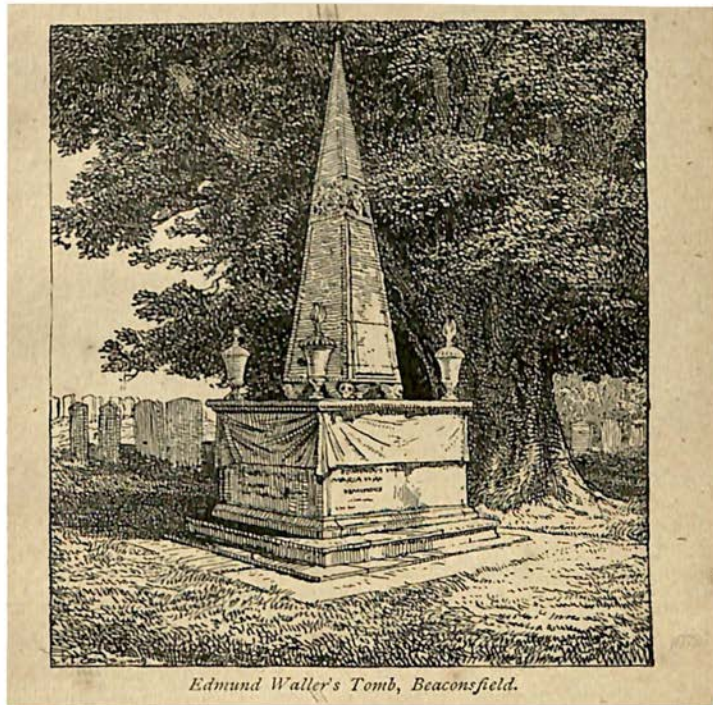
To many the most interesting thing about Amersham church is the tradition that John Knox once occupied its pulpit. His temporary mission in this county, whither he was sent by the Reforming Party in London in 1553, the very year that Edward the Sixth died and his half-sister Mary came to the throne, seems to have centred in Amersham, which before and after his mission was notable for its martyrs to the Reformed Religion. Knox's denunciation of the proposed accession of Mary to the throne soon made England too hot a place to hold him. Yet another eminent divine is associated with the Amersham pulpit, for here Richard Baxter held a public disputation with Anabaptist soldiers in the Parliamentary army. The church bears within it no record of these two remarkable men. This church is largely a mausoleum of the Drake family apart from the fine Drake Chapel which no visitor to Amersham should fail to see. Amersham church has been largely restored and a few brasses have been transferred from the floor to the walls. There is a good stained glass window over the altar and in the chancel are Drake tombs. There is one on either side of the altar, that on the right containing two busts over an urn, and that on the left a single figure. One of the brasses is to one of the Brudenells, the old owners of Shardeletes. We pass through a door on the left of the chancel into the Drake Chapel, where our attention is arrested by the fine monument to Montague Garrard Drake, who died in 1728, and

¹ *Echoes of Old County Life*. By J. K. Fowler, of Aylesbury, 1892.

Elizabeth Drake, who died in 1757, and even more by the fine monument to Thomas Drake, who was born in 1783 and died in 1852. It is an effigy in marble reclining on a couch. But perhaps Amersham is best known from its place in martyrology. For many generations there was a spot at the east of the town where it was said that the corn would never grow, and here, we are asked to believe, the martyrs were burned. In 1842 it was ploughed up and finally examined with some geological care, when it was discovered that there was a peculiar overlap of flints which caused abnormal drainage and impeded cultivation. But it is certain that many martyrs were burned here—not so much in the Marian persecutions as in the crusade against Lollardy. Foxe, of the *Acts and Monuments*, has been proved to be thoroughly inaccurate, but there is no room to doubt his account of the burning of William Tylsworth here in 1506, 'in a close called Stanley,' his own daughter being compelled to light the faggots. On the same day Robert Cosin, of Missenden, was burned at Buckingham. There were other martyrs in those years, some being branded on the cheek. The most interesting of the Buckinghamshire martyrs, however, was Thomas Harding, who was burned at Chesham in 1532, and there we shall find his monument.

Leaving the church we see on the Market Hall a sign-board that points to the fact that we are five miles from Beaconsfield. As we must come back to Amersham in order to visit Chesham and Chenies, we may, if we like, make a round tour that shall include Beaconsfield and Bulstrode, returning by Jordans and the Chalfonts. There are good inns at Beaconsfield, which can be reached independently by the Great Central Railway from Marylebone. Let us then take the road to Beaconsfield—a singularly steep one. We visit Coleshill on our way by a slight detour to see the Manor House which was the birth-place of Edmund Waller in 1605. There was even to our day an old oak tree near the house which was

called Waller's Oak, and tradition assigns to it a share in inspiring Waller's poetry. The church dates from 1860. On a fine day we shall enjoy our journey to Beaconsfield. It is a more substantial town than in the days when Burke was its most important inhabitant. This is to say that in 1801 there was a population of 1,100: there are now about 1,600. Beaconsfield

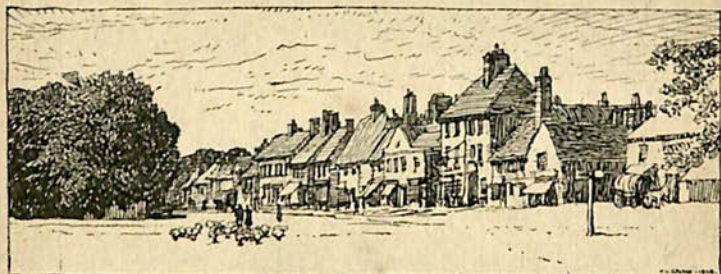


Edmund Waller's Tomb, Beaconsfield.

church strikes us at once, and Waller's tomb in the churchyard attracts our attention by its stone pyramid and its Latin inscription. But it is to Burke's tomb in the church that we naturally wend our steps. We find a simple stone under a pew in the aisle, and on the wall a marble tablet tells us that "*near this place lies interred all that was mortal of the*

Rt. Honourable Edmund Burke who died 9th July 1797." More recently a tablet with a portrait in relief was placed near this inscription.

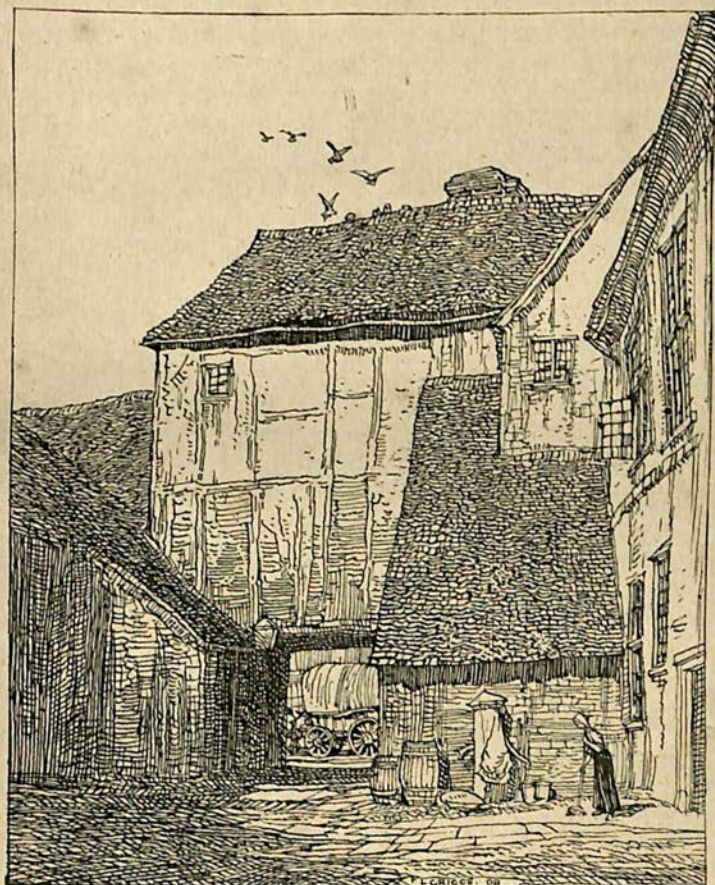
Beaconsfield may well hold Burke in honour. He laboured there assiduously at his home at Gregories alike as county gentleman, as statesman, and as philanthropist. The house owed its name to the family of Gregory, citizens of London, and a Mrs. Martha Gregory, who was buried at Beaconsfield in 1704, built the very substantial mansion, of which an engraving exists. Burke enlarged it and renamed the house Butler's Court. Although the house was burnt down in 1813 and not rebuilt, yet until quite recently the stables were standing and



Beaconsfield.

you could walk over the site of the building and recall the days when Burke was entertaining so many eminent statesmen and holding out the hand of fellowship to struggling authors, of whom Crabbe was the most noteworthy. Burke's generosity to the great poet of realism is writ large in our literary annals. Now every trace of Butler's Court has disappeared, and the land has been converted into commonplace dwelling-houses. In 1794 Burke applied for the Chiltern Hundreds and contemplated accepting the title of Lord Beaconsfield. But his son Richard was at the moment seized with a sudden illness and died. Burke was broken-hearted and his career

was over. "I am torn up by the roots and lie frustrated in the earth," he said. He cared nothing more for titles and honours, and in 1797 he died.



The George Inn, Beaconsfield.

"It is," says Lord Morley of Blackburn in his little biography of Burke, "a touching picture . . . to follow him

from the heat and violence of the House, where tipsy squires derided the greatest genius of his time, down to the calm shades of Beaconsfield, where he would with his own hands give food to a starving beggar, or medicine to a peasant sick of the ague ; where he would talk of the weather, the turnips, and the hay, with the wain men and the farm-bailiff ; and where in the evening stillness he would pace the walk under the trees and reflect on the state of Europe and the distractions of his country."

At either end of the town of Beaconsfield there is a country gentleman's house and park, but neither has any historical associations. On the one side of us we see the gates leading to Wilton House, on the other, those that take us to Half Barn, once associated with Waller. It is not the same house as the one that the poet called his home, for this was built in 1712 and has been much altered since. Its present owner, Lord Burnham, shows with pride the dagger that Burke threw upon the floor of the House of Commons upon a regrettable occasion. We remember that Sheridan spoiled Burke's hysterical move by saying, "We have seen the knife, where is the fork?" This was in 1792. Fox had denounced the Government Alien Bill that proposed to restrict the entry of foreigners into England as a concession to foolish claims, when Burke threw this dagger on the floor of the House and asked his audience to keep French principles from their heads and French daggers from their hearts.

CHAPTER XIV

BULSTRODE PARK AND JORDANS: THE TOMB OF PENN

FROM Beaconsfield we may continue our journey along one side of Wilton Park to Bulstrode Park and Gerrard's Cross, or we may reach Bulstrode if we follow the other side of the park to Hedgerley, in which parish Bulstrode Park is actually situated. Gerrard's Cross has but little history, but it is making its own to-day. The enterprise of the Great Central and the Great Western railways is popularising the village into what is practically a London suburb, and houses in large numbers are growing up around the Common, much as at Wimbledon.

Sheahan describes Gerrard's Cross in 1862 as "a highly respectable place with many genteel residences." The respectability remains, and the genteel residences have increased considerably. The place will ever be an attractive centre from which to visit many interesting monuments that we have approached from various other quarters. Perhaps no place can have a history, at least no English village, without an old church, and the church at Gerrard's Cross was not built until 1859. It was erected by two sisters in memory of their brother, George Alexander Reid, who in his day was M.P. for Windsor, and a Major-General in the British Army. This church is a Byzantine building, with an Italian campanile.

However, we have come to see Bulstrode Park, which, as we have said, is in the parish of Hedgerley, three miles

from Gerrard's Cross. Hedgerley is a small, secluded village, offering a sufficient contrast to its neighbour, Gerrard's Cross. Here again the church is modern, dating only from 1852, but it contains brasses from an older church built in 1770, which in their turn were removed from a church which must have been very ancient indeed. As one church was thus built upon another with exceptional rapidity, one is not surprised to find a similar palimpsest characteristic in the brasses that are here. There is, for example, a brass memorial to Margaret Bulstrode, who died in 1540, and to her children, ten sons and three daughters. This brass monument is actually made up of fragments of other brasses of a very remote period, the children being engraved on part of an ancient figure of a venerable ecclesiastic. There are brasses also to Robert Sutton and Johana his wife, dated 1498.

The most interesting thing in the church is a framed fragment of an altar cloth said to have been given to the church by Charles the Second, who, when on a visit to Hedgerley, found the altar bare, and threw his own cloak upon it. Here, as at Gerrard's Cross, we are at one of the four entrances to Bulstrode Park, long the seat of the Bulstrode family, which flourished at Bulstrode in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The family cherished a tradition of much earlier association with Bulstrode. They believed that they held these lands in Saxon times, and were almost the last to succumb to the rule of William the Norman. One Shobbington, it is said, aroused his retainers to oppose the Norman knight to whom William had given the manor. Shobbington was joined by his neighbours the Hampdens and the Penns. The Saxons cast up entrenchments, one of which is still to be seen in the park. Horses they had none, so they mounted on bulls and made an attack upon the Norman camp by night, putting the enemy to flight. William the Conqueror desired to see this doughty defender of his hearth and home, so Shobbington visited his camp

mounted on a bull, accompanied by his seven sons, also riding on bulls. William was impressed by these strange Saxon warriors, and forgave them ; whereupon they took the name of Bulstrode, and assumed a bull's head for their crest.

Bulstrode Whitelocke, who was Keeper of the Great Seal in the time of the Commonwealth, and the author of *Memorials of English Affairs*, was of this family, and was born at Hedgerley, probably in the Manor House. When Richard Cromwell succeeded his father, Whitelocke presented the address of congratulation from Buckinghamshire. He was buried at Fawley, as we shall see. The family, however, seemed to be dying out at Bulstrode in his day, for the Manor in James the Second's time came into the possession of the infamous Judge Jeffreys of the Bloody Assize, whose record of cruelty, in spite of latter-day attempts at rehabilitation, makes one loathe to associate his name with Buckinghamshire. In any case, he built a new mansion here in 1686. This was replaced by another in 1862, so that we do not visit the house of Jeffreys to-day. A son of Judge Jeffreys who inherited Bulstrode, sold it to that famous favourite of William the Third, Bentinck, Earl of Portland. There was much that was interesting about Bentinck. He helped to make the Revolution ; he was a faithful friend and servant of William of Orange. He appears to have had great nobility of character. It is with his name that we most like to associate this beautiful park. Bentinck died at Bulstrode in 1709, and his family, now Dukes of Portland, long resided here. The second Duke married Lady Margaret Harley, daughter of the Earl of Oxford, who survived him to reign over Bulstrode with considerable distinction. She was the owner of the famous Portland Vase, now in the Gem Department, British Museum. It was in her day that Horace Walpole describing Bulstrode and Latimers in one of his letters wrote :—

The former is a melancholy monument of Dutch magnificence : however, there is a brave gallery of old pictures, and a chapel with two fine windows of modern painted glass. The ceiling was formerly decorated with the

Assumption, or rather the *presumption* of Chancellor Jefferys to whom it belonged, but a very judicious fire hurried him somewhere else.

At a later date he writes :—

The Duchess of Portland has lately enriched me exceedingly ; nine portraits of the court of Louis Quatorze ! Lord Portland brought them over ; they hung in the nursery at Bulstrode, the children amused themselves with shooting at them.

His final reference, written in 1763, is characteristically sarcastic :—

I have been often at Bulstrode from Chalfont, but I don't like it. It is Dutch and Irish. The pictures you mention in the gallery would be curious if they knew one from another ; but the names are lost, and they are only sure that they have so many pounds of ancestors in the lump. One or two of them indeed I know, as the Earl of Southampton, that was Lord Essex's friend.

The Bulstrode pictures, at least those that belonged to the Portland family, are now at Welbeck Abbey.

The most interesting occupant of the house next to William the Third's favourite was the third Duke of Portland, who died here in 1809. This Portland was twice Prime Minister of England. His first occupancy of the post had the distinction of bringing Charles James Fox and Lord North together as Secretaries of State, but this famous coalition administration did not last a year. From 1794 till 1804 Portland was Home Secretary. After the death of Pitt, what was known as "the Ministry of all the Talents" came into office, and the Duke retired to Bulstrode. In 1807, however, he was called to power as being the only man under whom Canning and Castlereagh would consent to serve. These rival ministers fought a duel while still in the Government, and that episode, with their consequent resignation, is said to have killed the Duke. He resigned office in October, 1809, and died on the 30th of November of the same year at Bulstrode. His was not a very interesting personality, but one is attracted by the fact that three great contemporary statesmen had Buckinghamshire seats. While Portland was

at Bulstrode, Burke was at Beaconsfield, and Grenville was at Dropmore. The mansion described by Walpole was not the mansion that we see to-day. The present pile of irregular red buildings is the fourth house that has been erected on this spot. The Dukes of Portland were succeeded by the Dukes of Somerset as owners of Bulstrode. The house is now occupied by Sir John Ramsden, bart.

Many visitors to England from America will wish to visit Jordans, and will care more about that secluded spot than almost any other in Buckinghamshire. There is no village of Jordans, only a couple of houses and a graveyard; every driver of a conveyance in this part of the county knows it perfectly well, however. The visitor from London may take the train either to Gerrard's Cross or Beaconsfield, from either of which places he can easily obtain a vehicle that will convey him to the tomb of Penn. It is but two and a half miles from Gerrard's Cross, or three miles from Bulstrode; we, however, prefer to visit it by country lanes from Bulstrode Park, leaving Chalfont St. Peters on our right, until after we have seen Jordans.

We find this unpretentious spot known as Jordans at four cross roads, one leading to Beaconsfield, one to Penn and the others to the two Chalfonts. There we see the red-brick Quaker meeting-house, and by the side of it the little graveyard with its mounds and tiny grave-stones. The meeting-house is in charge of a caretaker, who shows you the little there is to see, and calls attention to the shutters, which, as she will explain to you, turned a gallery of the meeting-house into an ordinary room, and might well have deceived the persecutors of sectaries when they were hunting down the Quakers. Moreover, she will sell you it may be a book or two about Penn and his achievements. The graveyard, however, is where we most wish to linger. Here William Penn and Thomas Ellwood lie buried. To the Englishman interest will be divided between these worthies; to the American, naturally enough, a larger share will be given

to the founder of Pennsylvania. Near by is the farm of Stone Dean, long held by Quakers. Jordans, indeed, has been called the Westminster Abbey of the Friends, and here we naturally recall the time when they played so large a part in Buckinghamshire history. Ellwood has told much of the story in his *Autobiography*. That story begins at Chalfont St. Peter, at the Grange, where in 1658 Isaac Pennington came to live with his newly-wedded wife, Mary Springett, the widow of Sir William Springett, and the mother of one daughter by her first husband who was named Gulielma. George Fox the Quaker visited the pair this very year at Chalfont Grange, and Isaac Pennington, his wife, and his step-daughter joined the newly-formed Society of Friends. Thomas Ellwood, the son of an Oxfordshire squire, visited the Grange and he also becomes a Quaker. Ellwood's account of his conversion and the struggle with his father over his persistence in wearing his hat in his presence makes excellent reading. We have here also what is practically a history of the Quaker movement in Buckinghamshire. We may still find the house at Meadle, between Princes Risborough and Aylesbury, where the new convert attended service. In Aylesbury gaol Isaac Pennington was imprisoned for his faith, and Ellwood visited him there. This was in 1660. In the next year both Pennington and Ellwood were arrested and brought before Sir William Bowyer of Denham Court, but this time they escaped. It was Pennington who sent Ellwood to read Latin to blind John Milton in London, with the result that Milton came to Chalfont some few years later, as we shall see. Meanwhile the persecution of the Penningtons went on and they were compelled to give up the Grange at Chalfont where, by the way, Penn could never have visited them. In 1666 Isaac Pennington was still in prison in Aylesbury. Quaker meetings were taking place at the house of one George Salter at Hedgerley, and they were attended by the Pennington family and by Ellwood. Thomas and some of his friends were arrested here and also lodged in

Aylesbury gaol. Meanwhile Mary Pennington, Isaac's wife, and Gulielma Springett, who was to become Penn's wife, went to live at Amersham, at "Berrie House," as Ellwood calls it, which has been identified as Bury Farm, at the corner of the road leading to Beaconsfield. Then Mary Pennington built a new house at Amersham, "Woodside," which is still to be seen after two centuries, not very far from the railway station at Amersham. It was doubtless at Bury House, Amersham, that William Penn commenced to make love to Gulielma. His father, Sir William Penn, had been one of Cromwell's admirals. The admiral is often mentioned in Pepys's *Diary*, not too favourably, for their interests probably clashed at the Admiralty Office. The Penns of Penn, not many miles away, were of another family, but Penn liked to think they were of the same race, and the association with the village on the hill, that we have not yet visited, was renewed by Penn's successor, and six of his grandchildren are buried there. Penn called his house on the Delaware River Pennsbury Manor, after Pennsbury Farm near Penn. Penn's father quarrelled with him over his Quaker beliefs exactly as Ellwood's father had done with him. This was in 1668 and it was in that year that he first met Gulielma Springett. The following year Ellwood married Mary Ellis and went to live at Hunger Hill, Coleshill, at a house now destroyed, although you may still find a cottage that stood near his home hard by, near the Magpie Inn. It was in 1672 that Penn married Isaac Pennington's step-daughter. The wedding took place at King's Farm, Chorley Wood, half a mile across the border of our county. They lived for a time at Basing House, Rickmansworth, in Hertfordshire—six miles from Chalfont.

In 1678 Isaac Pennington died and was buried at Jordans. In 1682 Penn set sail in the *Welcome* to found a great city and State. He returned to become for a time a favourite with James the Second, who had been his father's friend. Macaulay's attacks on Penn in this connection do not come into the

story, but Macaulay in some portion of his indictment mixed up the great Penn with George Penne, a lawyer of Bridgewater. In any case Penn has had many defenders. It is only with kindness that those who knew his life-story will think of him in this quiet graveyard whither he was carried from his mansion at Ruscombe, near Twyford, August 5, 1718, and buried "in the presence of twenty or thirty political friends, and a vast number of Friends and others." Ellwood died at Hunger Hill in 1713, aged seventy-four, and he also was buried here by the side of his wife. We find that the more famous Quaker was not unmindful of the less ambitious one, for there is a letter from Penn extant, addressed to Philadelphia, instructing that one thousand acres of land be allotted "to my old and worthy friend, Thomas Ellwood, who cannot be unknown to you at least by a just fame and reputation."

The graveyard where the friends rest not far apart had been acquired by the Quakers in 1671 when they were worshipping at a farm-house at Jordans, not far distant. In 1688 they erected the meeting-house. Five children of Penn, his wife, Gulielma, and his second wife, Hannah—to whom he was married five weeks before his death—are all buried at Jordans, but it must not be thought that the tombstones we see to-day, simple though they be, are old. They were only erected in 1871. The writers on Jordans prior to this date declare that there were no tombstones. It may be worth considering therefore that a desecration of this churchyard may prove as unprofitable as that search for John Hampden's remains in Hampden Church, which we have already described. We know indeed that Penn was buried in a leaden coffin, but it is highly improbable that the present little tombstone is at the exact spot. We trust therefore that the proposal, often renewed, that the remains of Penn should be transferred to Philadelphia may not be persisted in. It is natural enough that the request should be periodically made by the people who have honoured the founder of their State in so many

other ways. But after all Penn was buried by his own wish in this grave by the side of his wife and children, and he left no request for removal across the Atlantic. Nevertheless, one is half persuaded that if the remains of William Penn can be recovered they will ultimately be carried to America. Even then the graveyard of Jordans will always have an interest for Englishmen through its association with Isaac Pennington and Thomas Ellwood—the friends of John Milton.

CHAPTER XV

THE CHALFONTS AND JOHN MILTON

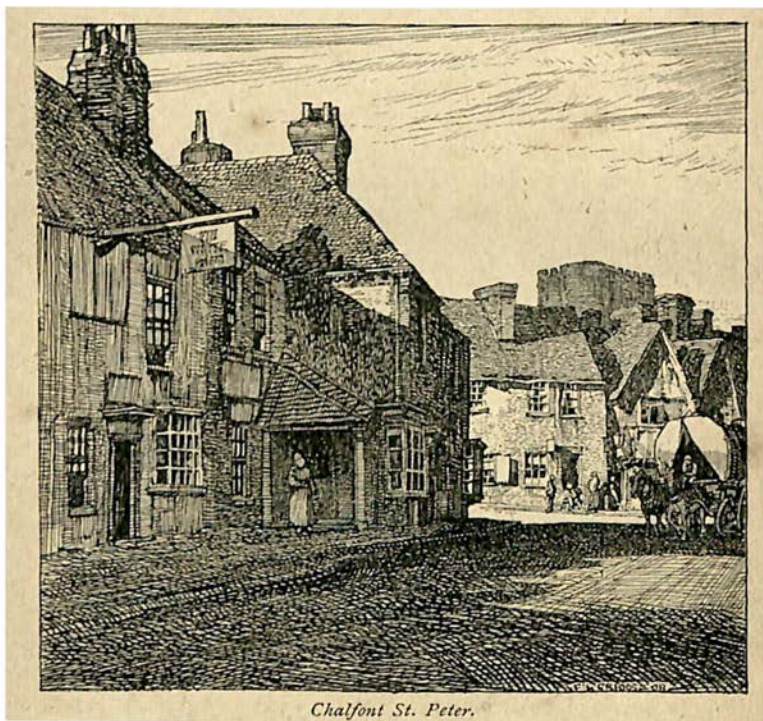
No one will visit Jordans without continuing his journey to Chalfont St. Giles. Ellwood writes of Quaker meetings "then holden at the house of William Russell, called Jourdans, in the parish of Giles Chalfont." Giles Chalfont is interesting to us to-day on account of its association with John Milton. Let not those who visit it from London think that when they arrive at Chalfont Road Station, on the Great Central Railway, they have accomplished their journey. There is a hilly walk of more than two miles before we reach the Pheasant Inn, where we are on the high-road between Amersham and Uxbridge. We turn to the right for Amersham, or to the left for Chalfont St. Peter. We must pass downhill by the side of the inn and a short walk takes us to Chalfont St. Giles. When we have made our way through the village, which consists of one long, straggling street, we see an old house on the left-hand side made familiar by a thousand pictures, and we are at "Milton's Cottage."

If we are at Jordans, however, we shall certainly take Chalfont St. Peter first of all, as it is much nearer, and we can continue the Quaker associations that are so full of historical interest. We here see the Grange, which stands on the site of an older house of the same name. At the Grange lived Isaac Pennington, the Republican, who was once

Lieutenant of the Tower, Lord Mayor of London, and a person of great importance in his day. He presented the famous "Root and Branch Petition," for the abolition of the Bishops. This Isaac handed over Chalfont Grange, in 1654, to his son Isaac upon his marriage with Lady Springett. Then came Isaac's conversion to Quakerism, and it was at the Grange that Ellwood, as we have seen, learned to become a Quaker. It was Pennington who sent Ellwood to see Milton in Jewin Street, London. All through Charles the Second's reign, the Penningtons suffered persecution for their faith. In 1666, they were compelled to leave the Grange, and Mary Pennington went first to reside at Aylesbury, where her husband was then in gaol for his religious beliefs. It is supposed that a little later Judge Jeffreys lived at the Grange, while his house at Bulstrode was being built. It is said that he built the Greyhound Inn here. The river flows pleasantly through Chalfont St. Peter, but the church is only moderately interesting. There are some old brasses, including one to William Whappelode, steward to Cardinal Beaufort, dated 1446. Lipscomb makes much of the fact that Abraham Newland, who was Chief Cashier of the Bank of England, resided here for some years before his death in 1807; but Newland is forgotten to-day, except in the name of Newland Park, which still survives. We are a little more attracted by the fact that Chalfont Park contains a house erected by Horace Walpole's brother-in-law, General Churchill. Walpole visited this house many times and refers to it as "the sweetest place imaginable." There is still an ash tree in the park 25 feet in circumference and known from time immemorable as "The Great Ash." At the cross roads, some distance from the village, is an obelisk, 50 feet high, erected to commemorate the fact that George the Third was in at the killing of a stag on this spot when hunting.

We now pass along the road to Amersham for a mile or two, until we reach the Pheasant Inn, and we then go down to the left for Chalfont St. Giles. Here we note, a mile or so from

the church, a mansion called *The Vache*, said to have been a dairy-farm in the reign of King John. That it was formerly owned by the family of *de la Vache* we know by many documents of the reigns of Edward the First and Edward the Third, but the family may have taken its name from the place. In the

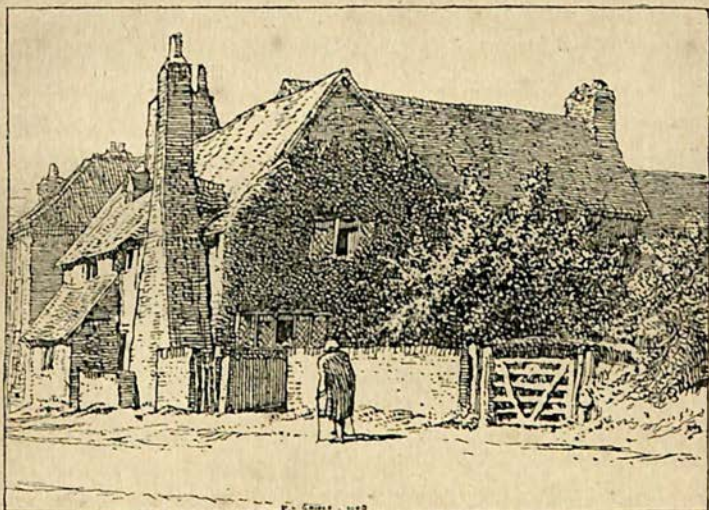


Chalfont St. Peter.

church is a brass to Thomas Fleetwood, "Lord of the Vache," who died in 1570. This Fleetwood, it appears from the brass, had two wives and eighteen children. George Fleetwood, who sat as one of the judges of Charles the First, owned the estate, which was in consequence forfeited to the Crown in 1661. In the eighteenth century it was owned by Sir Hugh Palliser, the

friend of Captain Cook, to whom he erected a monument with a globe on the top, and with the inscription : *To the Memory of Captain James Cook, the ablest and most renowned navigator this or any other Country hath produced.* Still later The Vache was owned by Francis Hoare, Bishop of Chichester, who accompanied the Great Duke of Marlborough as chaplain on the field of Blenheim. He died here in 1740.

There is an engraving of the Milton Cottage in Lipscomb's



Milton's Cottage, Chalfont St Giles.

book which shows us the house as it was seventy years ago. A fine porch has been removed, and two delightful old chimneys have given place to more modern and less picturesque ones. When the late David Masson saw the house thirty years ago before writing his life of Milton, it was also different in a measure from what it is to-day. Yet after all, the house is substantially the same, and still answers to Ellwood's description of it, as "a pretty box."

We pass through a gateway into a fragrant garden, and thence into the little room, which, tradition will have it, was Milton's sitting-room. Here we certainly wish to believe that the blind poet sat and wrote. Milton was at Chalfont in the hope of escaping the plague from July, 1665, until March of the following year.

"I was desired by my quondam master, Milton," Ellwood says, "to take an house for him in the neighbourhood where I dwelt, that he might go out of the city, for the safety of himself and his family, the pestilence then growing hot in London. I took a pretty box for him in Giles-Chalfont, a mile from me; of which I gave him notice."

The room to which the visitor gives most attention is now practically a museum; there are many editions of Milton's works, there are some letters, there are stray pictures illustrating his life. Milton, as an old friend of the Fleetwoods, who owned The Vache, had possibly been at Chalfont before this sojourn here, although his earlier home at Horton, which we have not yet visited, is fourteen miles away. At Horton Milton had lived from 1632 to 1639. Fleetwood's connection with Chalfont had, however, ended four years before Milton had come to live in the place. The Manor had been forfeited to the King as we have seen when George Fleetwood was attainted of high treason.

It must not be thought that Milton had altogether escaped the plague by this flight into Buckinghamshire. Masson tells us, as does Lipscomb also, that the registers of Chalfont St. Giles prove that there were many cases of plague in this very village. Although Ellwood had recommended Chalfont St. Giles, and had found the cottage for his friend and master, he was not able to attend Milton in his journey from London. Both he and Pennington were in Aylesbury gaol at the moment. Ellwood, however, had better tell the story in his own words:—

"But now, being released and returned home," says Ellwood, "I soon made a visit to him to welcome him into the country. After some discourses had passed between us, he called for a manuscript of his; which,

being brought, he delivered to me, bidding me take it home with me and read it at my leisure, and, when I had so done, return it to him, with my judgment thereon. When I came home and had set myself to read it, I found it was that excellent poem which he entitled: 'Paradise Lost.' After I had, with the best attention, read it through, I made him another visit, and returned him his book, with due acknowledgment of the favour he had done me in communicating it to me. He asked me how I liked it and what I thought of it; which I modestly, but freely, told him; and, after some further discourse about it I pleasantly said to him, 'Thou has said much here of *Paradise Lost*, but what hast thou to say of *Paradise Found*?' He made no answer, but sat some time in a muse; then brake off that discourse, and fell on another subject"

During the month of October of this year 1665, while Milton was at Chalfont, no less than 14,000 people died of the plague in London. In March Milton returned to his London house in Artillery Walk, and a few months later he began the printing of "*Paradise Lost*," some of which must have been written at Chalfont. It is one of the noblest traditions of our county—the presence here of the blind poet, dispirited though he must have been in the years that followed the Restoration of Charles the Second, at the extinction of all his hopes and aspirations for righteous government in the land, yet armed with the courage to write in this tiny Buckinghamshire cottage that glorious poem. It is an absorbingly interesting fact that Milton, the great poet of civil and religious liberty, should have been writing here in this corner of Buckinghamshire, midway, as it were, between places associated with two other veritable martyrs for the same noble cause. A few miles away, to the north of him, was the grave of John Hampden, who died in battle for the cause that Milton loved so well. Only four miles in another direction lies Chenies, where in yet a few more years was to rest another great martyr for that same cause—Lord William Russell.

CHAPTER XVI

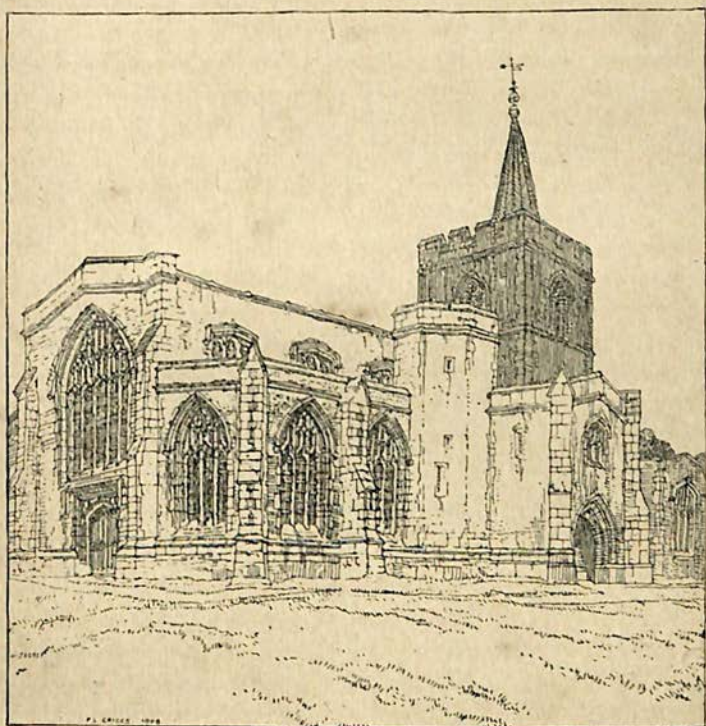
CHESHAM, LATIMER, AND CHENIES: THE TOMBS OF THE RUSSELLS.

THERE are many ways of reaching Chesham. If we dèsire to visit it from London we shall travel by a train from Marylebone, which will probably necessitate our changing at Chalfont Road Station, from which there runs a short branch line. If we are already at Amersham there is a direct road through Chesham Bois, and the whole distance is less than two miles. If we are at Great Missenden we can climb up to the church and follow a road to our right that takes us to Chesham—a walk of four miles. A pleasanter journey is along the Amersham road and then up a road on the left through the woods direct into the town. Chesham Bois has a church, erected in 1881, very pleasantly situated, and retaining many fragments of older churches on its site. We note, for example, its old brasses, one of which is to Benedict Lee, a son of Roger Lee. The child died in 1520. The inscription runs :—

“ Of Rog’ Lee, gentelma’ here
lyeth the son’ Benedict Lee,
chrysom’ who^s soule ihu p’ do’.”

A chrysom was a white vestment in which the child was wrapped by the priest after its baptism, and a chrysom brass commemorates an infant who died between baptism and the purification of its mother. The child, we see,

is represented in his shroud. Then there is a brass to Robert Cheyne, who died in 1552, and Elizabeth his wife, the knight being in armour. The place owes its name to the family of de Bosco or de Bois, which flourished here



Chesham Church.

in the thirteenth century. The Cheyne family were here for nearly three centuries—until 1728. Their mansion near the church has disappeared.

Although Chesham is well within the Chilterns, which bound it picturesquely on one side, and although it is one of the

largest towns in Buckinghamshire, it might almost be left severely alone by the traveller whose interests are solely in historical associations or in rural charm. The church indeed is strikingly situated, the churchyard is impressive, the river Chess, which rises here, is at odd moments quite pretty. We particularly note the fir-trees near by the factory, where thousands of children's hoops and spades are turned out. But the growth of Chesham—unlike most places in the county, it has tripled its population in a century—has not been made upon artistic lines. The struggling town which follows the high-road over the hills to Berkhamstead is much of it called New Town and it is fatally new from our limited point of view. The manufacture of boots and shoes is the principal industry. There is a pleasant walk through Chesham Park, which is open to visitors, and there is, as we have noted, a lovely drive through the woods of Chesham Bois to Amersham. Among the monuments in the church is one to John Skottowe, who was for many years Governor of St. Helena, and died in 1786, when the future famous exile Napoleon, and his gaoler, Governor Lowe, were each but seventeen years of age. In the churchyard is an Ionic cross, bearing the inscription :

“To the Glory of God and to the Memory of Thomas Harding, Martyr, of Dungle, Chesham, who, in fiery trial at the stake laid down his life for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ in this parish on May 30th, 1532. ‘The Noble Army of Martyrs praise Thee.’”

They will still show you at the north end of the town the spot where Harding was burnt in Henry the Eighth's reign. Half of Foxe's martyr stories have been demonstrated to be mythical, and the story of Harding rests on his unsupported testimony, still we give it for what it is worth. According, then, to Foxe, Harding's persecution commenced in 1506—in Henry the Seventh's reign—when he and others at Chesham were condemned “for speaking against idolatry and superstition.”

“Some to bear faggots, some were burned in the cheek with hot irons,

some condemned to perpetual prison, some thrust into monasteries, some compelled to make pilgrimages . . . to St. Romuld of Buckingham, some to the rood of Wendover, some to St. John Shorne."

Both Harding and Alice, his wife, were tried in 1515, and sentenced to do penance. In 1522, Harding was in trouble again, and was condemned to wear a badge of green cloth "embroidered like a faggot" for the remainder of his life. Finally, in 1532 he was observed not going to church, but turning into the woods to pray alone. His house was searched. Certain "English books of Holy Scripture" were found, and he was brought before John Longland, Bishop of Lincoln, at Woburn, who condemned him to be burned, committing "the charge and oversight of his martyrdom to Rowland Messenger, vicar of Great Wycombe." Harding was brought back to Chesham, the vicar preached against his heresies in the church, compelling Harding to stand before him all the time. The next day he was burned at the stake "in the dell going to Botley, at the north end of the town of Chesham." The Celtic cross which was erected to him in 1908, through the zeal of the present vicar of Chesham, has on one side of it a quotation from the preface to Wycliffe's Bible, asking for grace "to ken well and kepe well Holy Writ," and to be willing to "suffer joiefully some paine for it at the last." Harding's chief crime seems to have been the possession of this book.

The only other Chesham "worthy" of importance is of a quite different character. Many have assumed that the Mad Hatter was a creation of children's story-books, immortalised in *Alice in Wonderland*. But there really was a Mad Hatter, and he lived at Chesham for many years. His story is written in the *Harleian Miscellanies*. His name was Roger Crab. He had his "skull cloven" in the Civil War, and for some breach of discipline was sentenced to death by Cromwell. He was released, and then opened a shop at Chesham as "a haberdasher of hats." He took to vegetarianism and water drinking, then considered sure signs of madness, and clothed

himself in sackcloth. He was cudgelled, put in the stocks, and otherwise maltreated. He wrote several pamphlets that demonstrate his insanity, *The English Hermit, the Wonder of the Age*, is one of them, and *The English Hermit's Spade* is another. He died in 1680.

From Chesham we may pass out of the town in the direction of Chesham Bois, by which, it may be, we have approached it, and we see a sign-post pointing to Latimers or Latimer—a journey of a little more than three miles. It is a picturesquely situated village on the river Chess. The church was rebuilt in 1867. Interest centres in the fine Elizabethan mansion, the seat of Lord Chesham, described by Horace Walpole as “finely situated on a hill in a beech wood, with a river at the bottom, and a range of hills and woods at the opposite side.” Here Charles the First was a prisoner in the hands of the Parliamentary Army in 1647, and here his son, Charles the Second, was entertained on the eve of his flight to the continent. Here also was born Hester Sandys, who married Sir Thomas Temple of Stowe, of whom Thomas Fuller quaintly remarks in his *Worthies* that,

“She had four sons and nine daughters which lived to be married, and so exceedingly multiplied, that this lady saw seven hundred extracted from her body. Reader I speak within compass, and have left myself a reserve, having bought the truth hereof by a wager I lost.”

Yet another mile and a-half and we are at the model village of Chenies, once known as Isenhampstead—a delightful spot. There is a village green, with a well in the centre, and clusters of cottages, of artistic appearance, all the property of the Duke of Bedford. There is above all an inn in which it is a privilege to tarry, and there is a trout stream, to which James Anthony Froude devoted many pages in his essay on “Chenies and the House of Russell.”¹ Mr. Froude's essay on Chenies is the classic of the subject, but the visitor to Chenies who is not

¹ *Fraser's Magazine*, 1879. Reprinted in “Short Studies on Great Subjects,” Vol. IV.

armed with an introduction to the Duke of Bedford's steward must come away from the church somewhat disappointed. He will find the actual church, to which admission is easy, only moderately interesting, and he will only be able to see a few of the many fine monuments by peering through the arches that separate the church from the Russell chapel. He will wish to enter the chapel and will not be permitted to do so. A tablet over the east window tells us that "this Chapel is built by Anne Countess of Bedford, wife to John, Earl of Bedford A.D. 1556." There is a monument to this Anne and her husband in alabaster. Walpole described the chapel tombs in a letter to George Montague in 1749:—

"I have just seen a collection of tombs . . . the House of Russell robed in alabaster and painted. There are seven monuments in all; one is immense, in marble, cherubim'd and seraphim'd, crusted with bas-reliefs and titles for the first Duke of Bedford and his Duchess. All these are in a chapel of the church at Cheneys, the seat of the first earls. There are but piteous fragments of the house remaining. . . . It is dropping down, in several places without a roof, but in half the windows are beautiful arms in painted glass. As these are totally neglected I propose . . . begging them of the Duke of Bedford. They would be magnificent for Strawberry Castle."

The earl whose wife built the chapel enjoyed fifty years of public life. He was a friend of Henry the Eighth, and he served Edward the Sixth, being zealous in forwarding the Reformation. He would have liked to see Lady Jane Grey on the throne, but he managed to retain the confidence of Mary the First and assisted at her marriage to Philip the Second. The second earl, whose tomb also we see here, was in the service of Elizabeth, and played no small part in the tragic destiny of Mary Queen of Scots. He attended the christening of Prince James, afterwards James the First of England. Frances Drake was born on his estate at Tamworth, and was named after him. The tomb that interests us most is that of the first Duke, the father of Lord William Russell. The first Duke of Bedford married the only daughter of a luckless marriage. His Duchess was the child

of Robert Carr Earl of Somerset, the favourite of James the First, by Lady Essex, who, to secure him for husband, had planned the murder of Overbury in the Tower. Notwithstanding her parents' tragic misdeeds Anne Carr made a good wife and a noble duchess. Of these misdeeds she knew nothing until in a bereaved old age she read, at Woburn, if we are to believe Mr. Froude, a pamphlet with an account of the Overbury murder. "For the first time," he says, "she learnt the dreadful story. She was found senseless, with her hand upon the open page, and never rallied from the blow." Anne Duchess of Bedford was the mother of the martyred William Russell, and thousands of people will long continue to visit Chénies solely to see the tomb which contains the ashes of this, the last of a succession of great martyrs for the cause of English liberty. Lord William Russell, or Lord Russell as he is more correctly called, was charged with a share in the Rye House Plot. His sole aspiration had been to save England from Charles's growing despotism and to compel the assembling of a Parliament. He was pre-eminently the Saint of the Revolution that triumphed with William of Orange, as Hampden was the Saint of the Revolution that triumphed with the Commonwealth. His death, more than any other cause, made the Stuart dynasty impossible for our land. James the Second, even more than his brother Charles, was responsible for the sentence of death being carried out. Russell's father, the earl, pleaded in vain, as did Lady Russell, his wife, who had acted in court as her husband's secretary. Russell died on the scaffold in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Years afterwards his widow, Rachael, visited Chénies, and wrote of having satisfied her "longing mind" with a view of the place where her husband was buried, and where she now rests beside him. Froude has described the monument that we here see as a "monstrous outrage upon taste and simplicity." The Duke is facing his Duchess, both being represented in an attitude of violent grief. Among the medallion portraits of their

children the eldest, Lord Russell, stands out conspicuously in the centre. Another tomb of the thirteen at present to be seen that greatly interests us is one to Lord John Russell, the first Earl Russell, who stood for reform in days when it was at least safer so to do than it had been for some of his family. His monument is composed of two slabs of black marble upon columns.

The church of Chenies contains brasses to Lady Cheyne and her second husband, E. Molyneux, dated 1494, and one to Anna Philyp, dated 1510. The present Manor House, opposite the church, has long been given over to the Duke of Bedford's steward. It is not a third of the size of the original mansion visited by Queen Elizabeth in the days of its founder, the first Earl of Bedford.

CHAPTER XVII

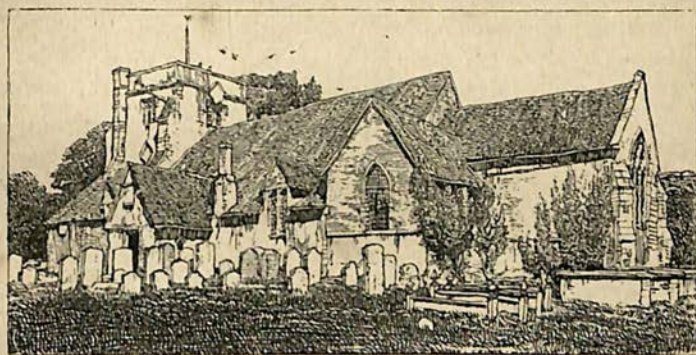
HIGH WYCOMBE, HUGHENDEN, AND BRADENHAM: THE TWO D'ISRAELIS.

HIGH WYCOMBE is very easily reached from London by two separate lines. It is the second largest town in the county, and may be recommended as a good centre for seeing Bradenham, the home of Isaac d'Israeli, Hughenden, the home and burial-place of his greater son, to say nothing of West Wycombe with its interesting memories of the eccentric Francis Dashwood.

If we enter High Wycombe through the country we have just been describing, that is by the road from Amersham, we shall come very near to the picturesque village of Penn, which is often visited by Pennsylvanians on account of some confusion with Jordans. Certainly neither Admiral Penn nor his son was any connexion of the Penns of Penn, although it pleased the great William Penn to believe that he was of the same race. The church has the merit, rare in the county, of being always open to the visitor. It is splendidly situated on a hill. In it we see many tombs of the Penns who flourished here for two centuries, when Sir Nathaniel Curzon of Kedleston married Sarah Penn, the daughter of one William Penn, and the heiress of his estates. Sir Nathaniel does not appear to have been buried at Penn, but his children are. We note a daughter who died in 1701, a son who died

in 1713, and another son who lived to be Baron Curzon of Penn and was buried in 1820.

There are two monuments by Chambrey to two Lady Howes, the mother and wife of the first Earl Howe, who succeeded to the Curzon estates here. We are naturally attracted by the brasses to the Penns; to John Penn who died in 1596, to William Penn who died in 1638, and to Arthur John Penn who died in 1641. The last is the most interesting. His wife is with him, and beneath are their ten children, five women and five men, all quaintly dressed. The boots and shoes of the male



Penn Church.

figures are particularly striking. Another brass of 1540 is of a lady in a shroud with long, flowing hair and a scroll with the words :—

In the day of Judgement, save me lorde.

This is Elizabeth Rok, and her tomb is one of the many "shroud" brasses scattered through our English churches with a too gruesome realism. We shall see five in our county.

William Penn, as we have said, liked to think that he was a member of the same family as the Penns of Penn, but no genealogical tree demonstrating the connection has ever been

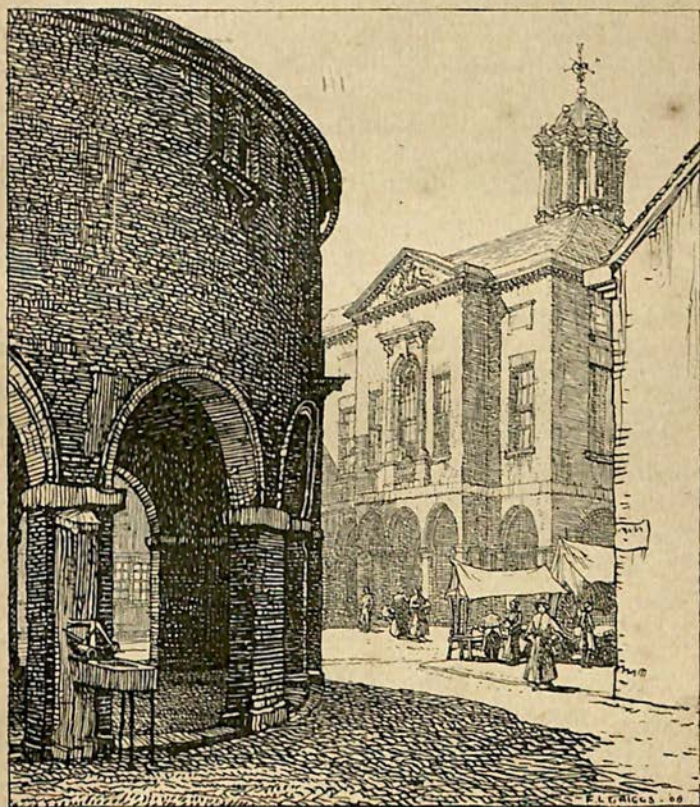
made. It is of small importance when Penn's achievements are considered, but how much his family cared for the association may be evidenced by the fact that six of his grandchildren are buried in this church. One has the inscription :

“William, Son of the Hon^{ble}. Thomas Penn, Esq., Proprietor of Pennsylvania, and of the Right Hon^{ble}. Lady Juliana Penn, his Wife, died Feb. 14, 1753, aged 7 months.”

At Penn we are only three miles from Beaconsfield, and as we pass along the road to High Wycombe, which is four miles away, we are again reminded of Burke. We pass a field known as the French School Meadow, and here once stood the school which Burke founded in 1796 for the children of fatherless *émigrés*, whose parents had perished by the guillotine. He was wont to walk or drive over to see these children. After Burke's death the school was, until 1814, supported by the Government at the cost of £600 per annum. The children wore a blue uniform, and in their hats a white cockade inscribed *Vive le Roi*. Those who had lost their fathers had it placed on a red label, those who had lost uncles, on a black one. The pupils were all sent back to France in 1820.

The first thing we notice at High Wycombe is its church, which is the largest in the county. The tower was built in 1522 by that Roland Messenger, Vicar of High Wycombe, who is charged by Foxe, as we have seen, with the death of Thomas Harding of Chesham. Messenger resigned the living in 1539. Part of the church was built by the Abbess of Godstow in 1273, that is to say in the reign of Edward the First. Among the tombs, that to Henry Petty, Earl of Shelburne, is the most conspicuous. He bequeathed £2,000 for the purpose of its erection. There is also a monument to Sophia, Lady Shelburne, who died in 1771. The once famous Samuel Clarke who made a “Concordance” to the Bible, and wrote much in the way of commentaries, died at High Wycombe in 1701. He had been Vicar of Grendon

Underwood in this county but was ejected in 1662. He founded the first Nonconformist church in High Wycombe. Next to its handsome church, the Market-hall or Guildhall at



The Little Market House and Town Hall, High Wycombe.

High Wycombe most attracts our attention. The eye is caught by an inscription which tells us that the hall was

“erected in the year of our Lord 1757 at the expense of John Earl of Shelburne in memory of which the Corporation caused this to be written.”

An earlier Guildhall, built in 1604, was burned down. We open a door on the right-hand side under the arch, which happily is unfastened, even on a Sunday, and we find ourselves in the council chamber. In the two rooms are many interesting pictures. Facing us as we enter the smaller room or council chamber is Mortimer's "St. Paul preaching to the British Druids." This Mortimer was made a Royal Academician in 1779. He painted "King John granting Magna Charta" among his other works. Dr. Bates, of Little Missenden, to whom we have already referred, found Mortimer in his studio playing with a ball at the game of fives against his picture of St. Paul. After a remonstrance Mortimer gave him the picture and Bates presented it to High Wycombe church in 1778. For a hundred years it did duty as an altar-piece. It was then given to the Corporation and so it now hangs in the council chamber. The picture scarcely deserves the eulogium of John Parker, the historian of High Wycombe, that it is "a splendid production of art." Mortimer was first buried in Little Missenden church, but six months afterwards "in honour of his great master-painting," his remains were interred in the chancel of High Wycombe church. The portrait of Edward the Seventh, by Graves, was the gift of Lord Carrington, "of Wycombe Abbey," who was aide-de-camp to the King when, as Prince of Wales, he visited India. The other portraits in the smaller room are of local worthies.

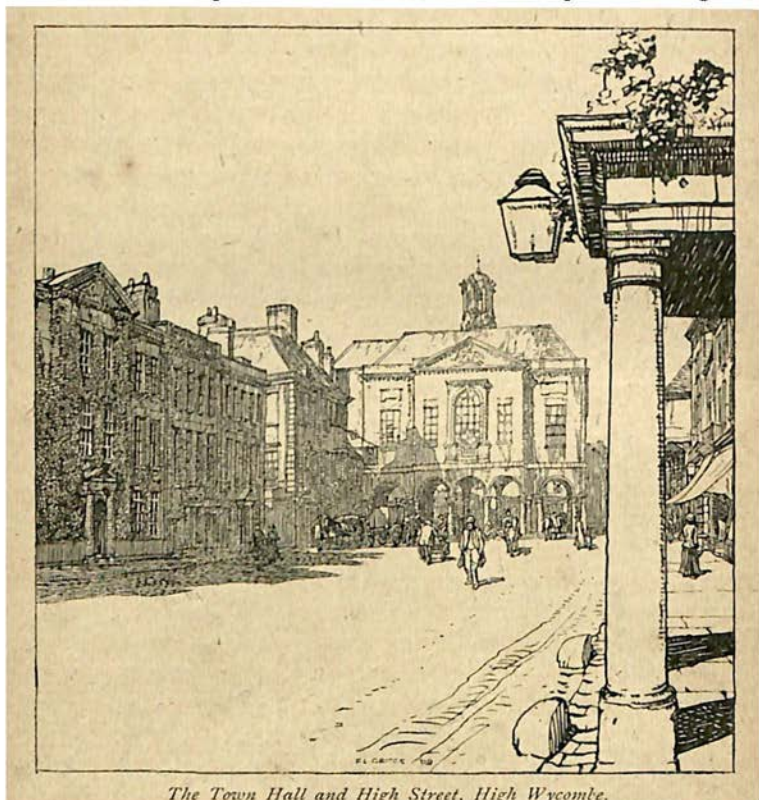
The larger room of Wycombe Guildhall contains a supposed Vandyk, a portrait of Philip, fourth Lord Wharton; of Lady Jane, his second wife, by whom he came possessed of the Goodwyn estates at Upper Winchenden and Wooburn; and of Henry, their fourth son. It is supposed to be from the collection at Wooburn, most of which was purchased by the Czar of Russia, and now ornaments the Winter Palace at St. Petersburg. According to Parker, Mrs. Alfred Lane presented this picture to the Guildhall, in 1863. There would thus have been a long interval between the distribution of the Wooburn

pictures in 1750 and the transfer of this particular picture to the Guildhall. We make that point because it is clear that here is only a very indifferent copy of Vandyk's picture and not an original. There is here also a "Raising of Lazarus," by Spranger, and a portrait of Queen Anne.

The Lord Shelburne who rebuilt the Guildhall—John Petty—must not be confused¹ with the Henry Petty whose magnificent monument, by Scheemakers, we find in High Wycombe church. The former was John FitzMaurice, who was born in Dublin in 1737, and assumed the name of Petty. He became Earl of Shelburne and his son was the first Marquis of Lansdowne. He owed the possession of the estate to the fact that Henry Petty, Earl of Shelburne, the son of Sir William Petty, the famous man of science of James the Second's reign, had no children. As the epitaph on his tomb tells us, his estate reverted to an Irish cousin; for Anne, Sir William Petty's daughter, had married the Earl of Kerry, and her son came into the Shelburne estates. Thus we meet three Shelburnes at Wycombe, John of the Guildhall, Henry of the tomb, and William, first Marquis of Lansdowne, who sold Wycombe Abbey, then called Loakes, to the then Lord Carrington in 1798. On the Shelburne tomb we see a medallion with the head of Sir William Petty, the Earl's father and the founder of the great Lansdowne family. Sir William, by the way, was the son of a tailor at Ramsey, in Hampshire. He is the subject of one of Aubrey's *Lives*. He was an eminent political economist and a man of great learning. Of his father, Aubrey says, "he was by profession a clothier, and also did dye his owne cloathes." He tells us that William Petty once lived in Paris for a week on twopennyworth of walnuts. Aubrey is also responsible for the following anecdote of Petty, who, it may be added, is buried at Ramsey, in Hampshire, by the side of his father, the tailor, and not here by his peer son :

"I remember about 1660, there was a great difference between him and

one of Oliver's knights. The knight . . . challenged Sir William to fight with him. Sir William is extremely short-sighted, and, being the challengee, it belonged to him to nominate place and weapon. He nominates for the place, a darke cellar, and the weapon to be a great



The Town Hall and High Street, High Wycombe.

carpenter's axe. This turned the knight's challenge into ridicule, and so it came to nought."

Opposite the Town Hall is the Little Market House, which Sheahan, writing in 1862, called "an unsightly structure," asking for its removal. We hope it will long remain. We

now pass through the town up the High Street, which leads to London, and we shall see on our right some old almshouses. Exactly opposite is the Grammar School, which has been almost entirely rebuilt. The old Norman arches are of a Hospital of St. John the Baptist of the twelfth century that stood on the site. Among the founders of the school occur the names of Christopher Chalfount and Sir Edmund Peckham, both of whom flourished in the reign of Edward the Sixth. The latter is buried in Denham Church, which we have yet to visit. Queen Elizabeth made this a Royal Grammar School. Edmund Waller, the poet, was a pupil here, and he came to represent High Wycombe in Parliament, as did at other times Sir Edmund Verney and Thomas Scott the regicide.

The Manor House of Loakes, now known as Wycombe Abbey, was long the seat of the Shelburnes, and then of the Carringtons from 1798 until 1896. It has been at least twice rebuilt, and is now a girls' school. It never was an abbey. The present Lord Carrington lives at Dawes Hill, on the ridge overlooking the town.

The principal industry of High Wycombe is the manufacture of chairs, the material not only being derived from the neighbouring beech woods, but much of the actual manufacture being carried on in the heart of the woods. Not the least attractive feature in week-end walks through these woods is the glimpse obtained of the gypsy-like encampments in which the various parts of a chair are cut out by hundreds and thousands. Writing in 1862 Sheahan says that "the Wycombe chair-making trade was scarcely known . . . twenty or thirty years ago." The chair-making industry of to-day, we may add, extends far beyond the utilisation of the wood actually grown in Buckinghamshire.

From the balcony of the Red Lion, Benjamin Disraeli, afterwards Earl of Beaconsfield, made his first political speech, and this brings us to the most remarkable figure in the latter-day history of Buckinghamshire. Disraeli's father, Isaac d'Israeli

—thus it was always spelt before Benjamin reached distinction—lived beyond Hughenden—at Bradenham, and we shall thus make High Wycombe our headquarters for visiting both Bradenham and Hughenden, the seats of father and son. But Bradenham is on the road through West Wycombe—the Oxford Road—and is four miles away, while Hughenden is but just outside High Wycombe on the road to Great Missenden, and we may as well go there first. When we have passed through the street of straggling houses which make this the least picturesque outlet from High Wycombe, we are compensated by a delightful woodland road, with Hughenden Park on our left. We see a gate with a lodge and the path brings us very quickly to the church, while we may observe the house very conspicuously from many points, although we may not enter, unless we have obtained permission from the present owner, Mr. Coningsby Disraeli, a nephew of the great statesman. We are struck by the absence of population at Hughenden. The usual village does not exist, but the goodly congregation on a Sunday is accounted for in that it is drawn from the neighbouring hamlets of Kingshill and Naphill, to say nothing of the fact that the stalwart pedestrian from High Wycombe often walks across to the service here.

In the churchyard we are at once attracted by the railed-in memorial to Lord Beaconsfield and his wife. Against the wall of the church is a granite tombstone in three portions. In the centre we have the inscription :—

“In Memory of Mary Anne Disraeli Viscountess Beaconsfield in her own right, for thirty-three years the wife of the Right Honourable Benjamin Disraeli. Lord of this Manor O.B. December 15, 1872, and of the Right Honourable Benjamin Disraeli Earl of Beaconsfield and Viscount Hughenden, K.G. Born Dec. 21, 1804, died April 19, 1881.”

On the right is a slab :—

“In Memory of James Disraeli, Esq^{re}, one of Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inland Revenue and third son of Isaac Disraeli, Esq^{re}, of Bradenham, in this County. Author of the *Curiosities of Literature*, O.B. December 28, 1868.”

On the left we read :—

“In Memory of Sarah Brydges Willyams, Relict of James Brydges Williams, Esqre., of Carnanton in the County of Cornwall and Colonel of the Royal Cornish Militia. She died at Torquay, 11 Nov., 1863, and was buried at her desire in this vault.”

Near by a simpler tomb commemorates : *Ralph Disraeli—born May 9, 1809, died October 18, 1898.* This was Lord Beaconsfield's brother, whose son Coningsby became the heir to his estate.

The Miss Williams who is thus buried by the side of the famous statesman and his wife owes the distinction to the hero-worship which led her indirectly to buy this estate for the man whose name will always be associated with it. After the publication of each of his novels, Disraeli was in the habit of receiving enthusiastic letters from this lady, then an entire stranger to him. He wrote nothing more than formal letters of thanks. Visiting Torquay with his wife some time afterwards, the pair called upon their unknown correspondent. Thus commenced a friendship which culminated at the old lady's death in her leaving her favourite novelist a fortune of some £40,000. This enabled Disraeli to pay off the mortgage upon the Hughenden estate. When, about the year 1845, he purchased Hughenden for £35,000, he and his wife could only provide £15,000 of the purchase money, the remainder having been borrowed on mortgage.¹ Mr. Fowler is responsible for the interesting story that when Disraeli contested High Wycombe unsuccessfully in 1832, he called upon the then owner of Hughenden, a Mr. Norris, who “refused him admittance, and shut the door in his face.” What a pity the worthy Norris did not live to see Disraeli as the idol of his (Norris's) own party !

In Hughenden church, on the left side of the organ, will be found a handsome mural monument to Lord Beaconsfield with the following inscription :—

“To the dear and honoured memory of Benjamin Earl of Beaconsfield

¹ Fowler's “Echoes of Old Country Life.”

This memorial is placed by his grateful sovereign and friend Victoria R.I. Kings love Him that Speaketh Right, February 27, 1882."

Opposite is a stained glass window to the memory of Sir Norris Young, Bart., killed at the battle of Alma on September 20, 1854, aged 21, and of his brother, Sir George John Young, who died of cholera before Sevastopol, October 22 of the same year, aged 19, having borne the title exactly a month.

Another stained glass window commemorates Lord Beaconsfield, with the following inscription beneath it :—

"To the Glory of God and to the Memory of the Rt. Hon. Benjamin Disraeli Earl of Beaconsfield, K.G., late Prime Minister of England; this window was erected by Undergraduates of the University of Oxford, A.D. 1881.

In the entrance to the church is a monument to Ellen Countess Conyngham, who died in 1816, aged 92, and opposite a monument erected by the Countess to John Norris, of Hughenden, and his parents, the said John who died in 1786, having it as his title to fame that he bequeathed five thousand pounds to Magdalen College, Oxford. There are also five or six ancient tombs. One is to an Abbess of Kenilworth, another is to a crusader, who was formerly supposed to be an illegitimate son of Simon de Montfort; he has the bar sinister on his tomb. A third tomb is to a monk, whose soul is seen escaping from his body. Many of the great Simon's family were once thought to be buried here in long-forgotten tombs. Disraeli was very proud of the association of the place with Earl Simon's family, but this is now known to be an erroneous assumption.

Disraeli, as we have said, bought the house in 1845. In 1847, he became M.P. for Buckinghamshire, and for this county he continued to be returned until he was made a peer in 1880. We may enjoy a pleasant walk from Hughenden to Disraeli's earlier home at Bradenham. There is a footpath at the lower end of the park that leads through Common Wood to Downley Common, and thence across Naphill Common. Bradenham is a most pleasing village, of which the Manor House

is the most interesting object. It stands near the church, a fine mansion which will come as a surprise to those who think of Disraeli the younger as a self-made man. In this house Isaac d'Israeli lived from 1829 until his death in 1848 at the age of eighty-two. We shall find his tomb in the church and we shall have seen a monument to him in Hughenden Park as we have passed from Hughenden to Bradenham. It was his friendship with Pye, the Poet Laureate, that led Isaac d'Israeli into Buckinghamshire. Pye had been a rich man but had fallen on evil days financially when the then owner of Stoke Park, William Penn, a descendant of the founder of Pennsylvania, presented him with a cottage on his estate, "and it was thus," says Benjamin Disraeli, in a life of his father attached to the *Curiosities of Literature*,

"that my father became acquainted with the amiable descendant of the most successful of colonisers and with that classic domain which the genius of Gray, as it were, now haunts, and has for ever hallowed, and from which he beheld with fond and musing eye, those

Distant spires and antique towers,

that no one can now look upon without remembering him. It was amid these rambles in Stoke Park, amid the scenes of Gray's genius, the elegiac churchyard, and the picturesque fragments of the Long Story, talking over the deeds of the 'Great Rebellion' with the descendants of Cavaliers and Parliament-men, that my father first imbibed that feeling for the county of Buckingham, which induced him occasionally to be a dweller in its limits, and ultimately, more than a quarter of a century afterwards, to establish his household gods in its heart."

The church is separated only by a wall from this fine Elizabethan manor-house, which was visited by Queen Elizabeth in 1576, but was much altered in the eighteenth century. It is described by Lord Beaconsfield in his novel, *Endymion*, as Hurstley. In the church we are only interested in the tomb of Isaac d'Israeli, although, if we care to look back into history, we may recall that the chantry was built by Sir Andrew Windsor, who became Lord Windsor of Bradenham in 1529. His son, the second Lord Windsor, built the Manor

House. He died in 1558 and was buried here "with great pomp." His son, the third lord, entertained Queen Elizabeth. It was the third Lord Windsor's son who, as Rear-Admiral of the Fleet, in 1623 brought Prince Charles and Buckingham out of Spain after the failure of the Spanish Marriage journey. In the church we find no Windsor tombs. Its restoration in 1863 presumably cleared away the remains of these. There is a tablet on the wall with the following inscription:—

Sacred to the memory of Isaac Disraeli Esquire D.C.L. of Bradenham House, author of "Curiosities of Literature," who died January 19, 1848, in his 82nd year; and of his wife Maria, to whom he was united for forty-five years. She died April 21, 1847, in the 72nd year of her age. Their remains lie side by side in the vault of the adjoining chancel.

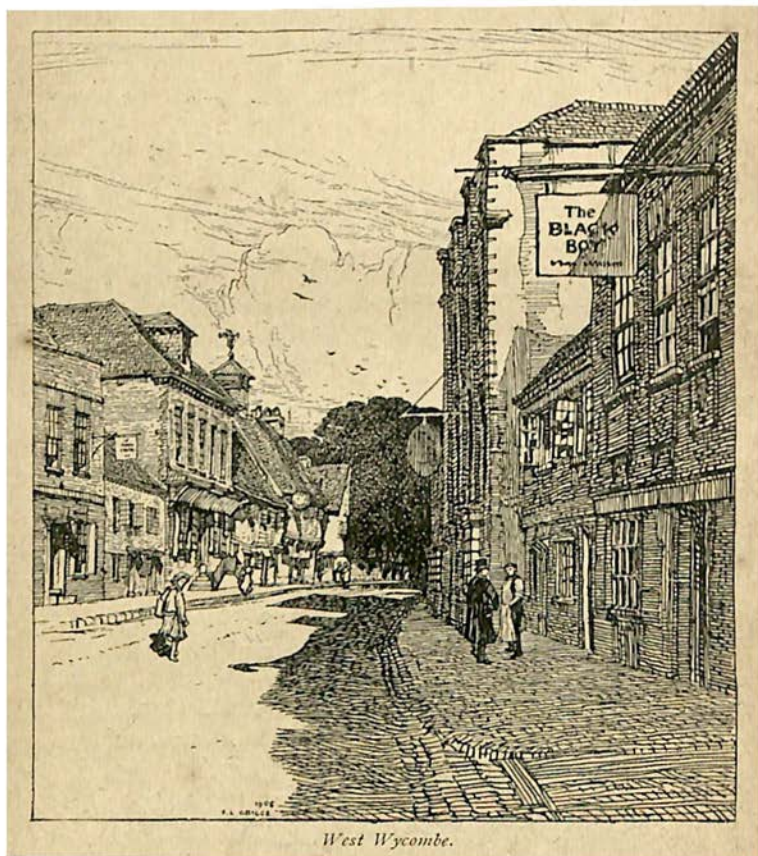
.. There is a monument to Charles West, son of Lord Delawarr, and to his wife, whose father, Sir Edward Pye, purchased Bradenham Manor of the Windsors. But our interest in Bradenham centres in the attractive figure of the author of *The Curiosities of Literature*.

CHAPTER XVIII

WEST WYCOMBE AND SIR FRANCIS DASHWOOD

WE leave High Wycombe by the Oxford road for West Wycombe, which is one of the most interesting spots in the county. We pass a rivulet that picturesquely sets off the houses on our left and we have two points of interest in the journey of two and a half miles. One is Desborough Castle, an earthwork consisting of a double entrenchment or camp, which is popularly called The Roundabout. The most recent authorities decline to assign to these famous remains either a Saxon or a Danish origin. Archæologists seem to have given up the puzzle as insolvable, although it is clear that the place was in Saxon times used for the folk-mote. Flint implements have been found here, and Desborough Castle has given its name to the hundred. At the cross roads we find a lofty column of stone surmounted with a globe. This is a kind of glorified sign-post erected when the road was made, and its figures that are supposed to guide us on our journey scarcely harmonise with those provided on the modest wooden sign-post near by. The column informs us that we are thirty miles "from the City" twenty-two "from the University" and fifteen "from the County Town." We feel the atmosphere created by the eccentric Dashwood, and this feeling is increased when we reach the village and look for the church, which we see on a hill far above us. It is quite worth a visit,

if only for the view. On Wednesdays and Saturdays we may find the church open. It would be a tragedy to climb so far and to discover that the doors were shut. There is a road for



West Wycombe.

motorists, although they must make a portion of their journey over the grass. The pedestrian will pass under an archway on the right-hand side of the village street. This arch is part of the old Church Loft, and we note the remains of an iron band

from the stocks and of a cross that is cut into one of the beams. There are two things to be seen when we have climbed the steep hill—the church and the mausoleum. On the way up this hill we may if we choose visit “the caves,” but they are not worth a visit. These caves are merely excavations made for the purpose of obtaining chalk. The villagers always believed that Dashwood had some wild and wicked design in making them. Indeed they will tell you even to-day that here were held some of the orgies of the Hell Fire Club. This is a myth. Everything that Dashwood did appeared to his commonplace neighbours to be wild and wicked. The caves extend for a quarter of a mile under the hill.

The church, dedicated to St. Lawrence, has many eccentricities. There is, for example, no pulpit. In place of this we have an ordinary armchair, and two other mahogany chairs do duty for reading desks. These chairs have richly carved desks in front of them. An inscription in the interior of the church informs us that it was built in 1763 by Francis, Baron Le Despencer. The ceiling of the church has a painting of the Last Supper, and the eyes of Judas are so painted that they follow the spectator to every corner of the building. There is some wood-carving by Grinling Gibbons in the chancel. The belfry, which is 646 feet above the sea, will seat ten persons. There is a tomb to Le Despencer's half-brother and successor, Sir John Dashwood King, and a mural tablet under an urn by Nollekens to a son of Dashwood King. There is a monument to the founder, Francis Baron Le Despencer, “Treasurer of the Chambers, Chancellor of the Exchequer,” &c., and an altar monument to his wife Sarah. But of even greater interest are the inscriptions in the mausoleum which we find outside the church and adjoining the churchyard. Before passing to this mausoleum we may, however, note John Wilkes's comment upon that hilly church in one of his letters. We quote from Almon's *Life* :—

“I am just returned from a tour into Buckinghamshire, which has
O

afforded me much pleasure. The noble prospect from Cliefden-house enchanted me, and I was in raptures with the many elegant beauties of Stowe. As an Englishman, I was pleased that all the great patriots and heroes of my country, Alfred, King William the Third, Hampden, Sir Walter Raleigh, &c., receive there that just tribute of praise, which this nation, while it remains free, will continue to pay to superior virtue. At Stowe, both ancient and modern virtue are enshrined with grateful magnificence. Not only good taste, but patriotism, are conspicuous in that delightful paradise; the favourite abode of the virtues, graces, and muses. Stowe, however, has so often been described by abler pens, that I shall dwell no longer there; though I never leave it without the most sensible regret. I returned by West Wycombe, and passed a day in viewing the villa of Lord Le Despencer; and the church he has just built on the top of a hill, for the convenience and devotion of the town at the bottom of it. I must own, the noble lord's gardens gave me no stronger idea of his virtue or patriotism, than the situation of the new-built church did of his piety. Some churches have been built from devotion, others from parade or vanity; I believe this is the first church which has been built for a prospect."

Lord Le Despencer, better known to the world as Sir Francis Dashwood, was born in 1708; at the age of sixteen he succeeded to the baronetcy. His reputation chiefly consists in the tradition of his wildness and eccentricity. The eccentricity is undeniable, as this church upon the top of a hill demonstrates, but the wildness of his life has probably been much exaggerated owing to the fact that most of the stories come to us from political opponents. If he founded a club that is traditionally assumed to have been entirely devoted to shameless depravity—and on that matter we shall have something to say when we reach Medmenham—he also founded a club of most undeniable respectability, at any rate in all its more recent stages. This last was the Dilettanti Club, of which Horace Walpole said that its nominal qualification for membership was having been in Italy, and the real one being drunk. Very early in life he had entered the service of Frederick Louis, Prince of Wales, and he was in that service and opposed Sir Robert Walpole's Government for many a year. His association with the "Hell-Fire Club," and even

the date at which that Club came into existence, are quite wrongly given in most of the biographical notes upon Dashwood, who, as we have said, is probably one of the most maligned figures in the social life of his time. In any case he made an attempt to save the life of Admiral Byng on the occasion when that unfortunate man was shot "to encourage the others." He certainly made a political failure when he became Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lord Bute's Government. But this does not entitle us to call him half mad as has been done very frequently. In 1763 he became Baron Le Despencer. Later he held the office of Postmaster-General in Lord North's long administration. He died at his house at West Wycombe, which is still occupied by a Dashwood, and in 1781 he was buried in this church.

The Dashwood mausoleum, which we reach after passing round the back of the church, is hexagonal in shape. We look through the railings of a locked gate at the monuments to Dashwood and his friends, of whom perhaps the best known was Paul Whitehead. Whitehead, who died in 1774, left his heart by will to Dashwood, who gave it an eccentric funeral on this spot, turning out the Buckinghamshire Militia, of which he was the colonel, to render funeral honours. The circumstance that the heart, which it was customary to take out of its urn to show to strangers, was stolen in 1839 may account for the locked gate. Whitehead is perhaps best known to-day by Churchill's epigram:—

May I—can more disgrace on manhood fall?
Be born a Whitehead and baptised a Paul.

and by the reference in Boswell's *Johnson* to the fact that the doctor refused to accept a smaller sum for his *London* than Dodsley had paid to Whitehead for a poem. Whitehead was a satirist, a bohemian, always in hot water. Perhaps the extremely bad name that was gained by the Hell Fire Club at Medmenham was largely due to the fact that Whitehead was its secretary. His best time was that in which his patron,

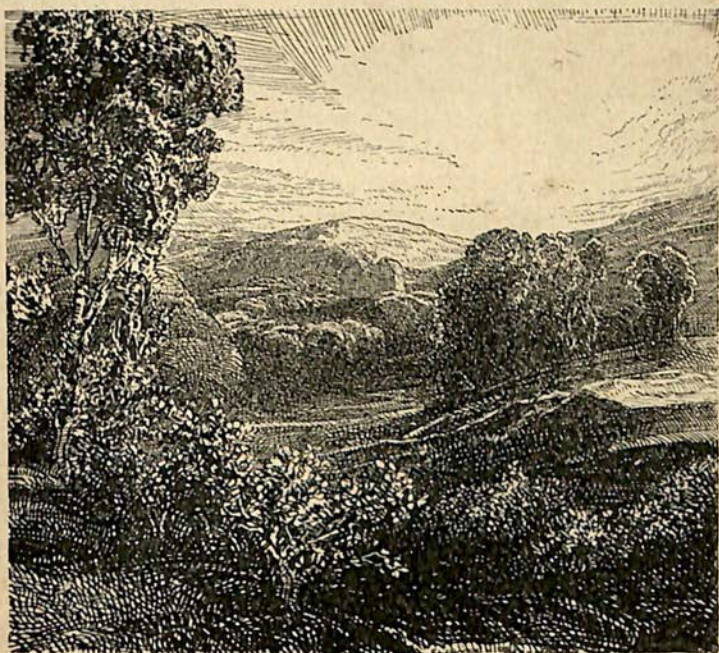
Dashwood, was in Lord Bute's administration. Dashwood gave him a post worth £800 a year, and he was then enabled to live in much comfort at Twickenham. Horace Walpole, writing to Richard Bentley, notes the fact that Kitty Clive the actress, Whitehead the poet, and other celebrities are among the "lions" of that village. So much for Whitehead. Let us return to the mausoleum. This was built by Dashwood, with funds left to him by the equally famous Budd Doddington, who became Lord Melcombe Regis. That is why you find an inscription to him over the entrance. Doddington does not come into this story except as one of the Monks of Mēdmenham. The central monument, an Ionic temple, is to Sarah Baroness Le Despencer. Busts and statues around the walls commemorate Lord Le Despencer, his two other wives, and his daughter. David Garrick wrote the inscription to Paul Whitehead :—

Here lies a man misfortune could not bend,
Praised as a poet, honour'd as a friend !
Though his youth kindled with the love of fame.
Within his bosom glow'd a brighter flame !
When'er his friends with sharp afflictions bled,
And from the wounded deer the herd was fled,
Whitehead stood forth, the healing balm applied,
Nor quitted their distresses—till he died.

From West Wycombe we continue along the Oxford road up the steep Dashwood Hill to Stokenchurch, five miles away, with a church that has much Norman architecture in its structure. There are some brasses, but not one of these has any historical or literary associations. One, dated 1415, has an inscription in French, as is often the case in the period of the Plantagenet kings. If, passing southwards, we skirt the border of the county—for here we are always very near to Oxfordshire—we come to the little hamlet of Warmsey, where one of the regicides, Adrian Scrope, lived. Scrope was born in 1601, and was married to a cousin of Waller the poet. He raised a troop of horse for the Parliament

at the opening of the Civil War, and he took part in the famous siege of Colchester. He signed Charles the First's death warrant, was put on his trial when Charles the Second came to the throne, and was executed at Charing Cross in October, 1660.

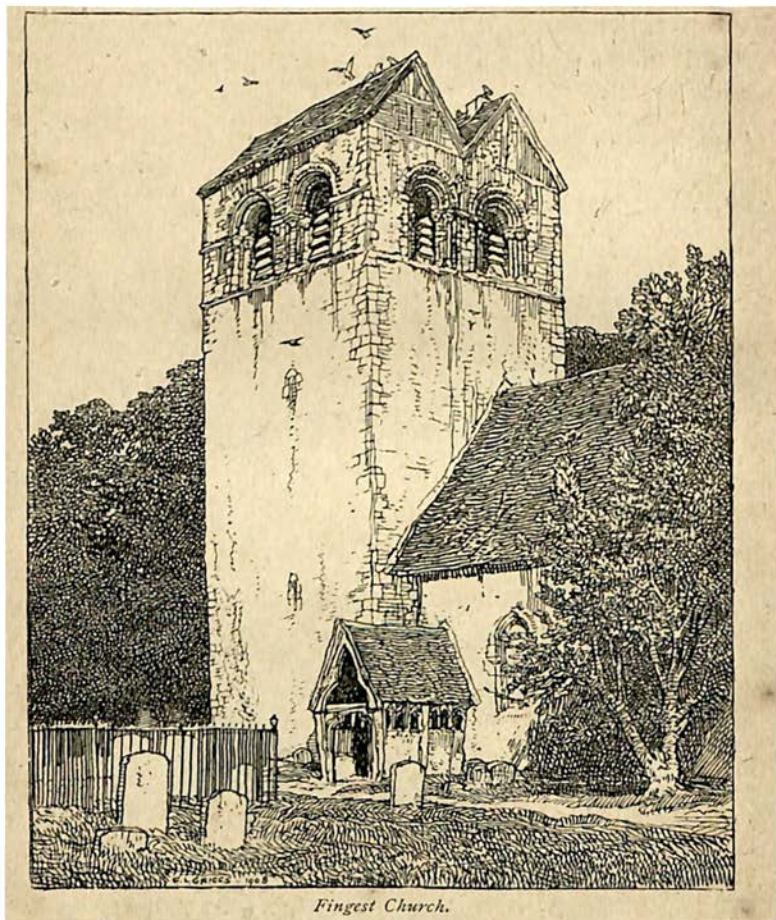
We pass on to Turville, and thence to Fingest, through



Fingest.

some of the most beautiful and too little-known hill scenery in all England. Turville is associated with Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst, and with that famous soldier and infamous traitor, Dumouriez. John Osborne, the bookseller, bought Turville Manor in 1753. This John Osborne is mentioned in Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes* as having died in 1775. He must not be

confused with the "dull" Thomas Osborne who lives now mainly for us from having been beaten by Dr. Johnson.



Fingest Church.

At Turville Park died Dumouriez in 1823. The victor of Jemappes, having turned against his own country and lived for years in England, by attempts to betray it, removed from

Little Ealing to Turville in March, 1822. He died a year later, and was buried in Henley Church. Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst took the same house in 1840, and lived there until 1854, when, as Lord Campbell tells us in his *Lives*, "the lease having expired, and the landlord having refused to renew it," he left Buckinghamshire. Campbell, by the way, places Turville in Oxfordshire.

At Fingest, half a mile away, we are in presence of an old church with a square Norman tower, and with fragments of the ruins of the Palace of the Bishops of Lincoln, who made this quiet spot their occasional home from 1163 to 1541. Hence there is a beautiful road leading to Hambledon and to the river; or we may make our way direct to High Wycombe, after a memorable experience of a beautiful country and really wild scenery.

CHAPTER XIX

THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE THAMES

NOT everyone of the many hundreds of people who visit it yearly recognise that some of the most beautiful scenery of the Thames is in this county, that from Staines, where we leave Middlesex, journeying towards Oxford, Wyrardisbury, Datchet, Eton, Dorney, Taplow, Cliveden with the adjoining Dropmore, Marlow and Medmenham are all in Buckinghamshire. From High Wycombe it is an easy run to Great Marlow, where we are in the very heart of this beautiful river scenery. We must choose whether to go up the river towards Henley and Oxford, or down the river towards Staines and London. We will assume the latter journey, and that we have arrived from London at Henley. We take a boat at Henley—they are to be found in abundance—and we find ourselves almost immediately passing out of Oxfordshire and sailing or rowing between the banks of Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. It may be—assuming that we have preferred to motor or cycle—that we ride along the road which from Henley runs almost parallel with the river as far as Marlow. Our first stop is at Fawley Court. The red house is interesting mainly on account of the fact that Bulstrode Whitelocke's son built it, after Wren's design, in 1685. Bulstrode resided in an earlier manor house on the same site. He was very much a Buckinghamshire man, and his *Memorials* bear constant reference to the

fact. This eminent Trimmer of the Commonwealth Period, the at one time enemy, at one time coadjutor, of Cromwell, who nevertheless succeeded in conciliating Charles the Second, is only in a moderate degree an addition to the great memories associated with our county. But he very much belongs to it all the same, although he was actually born in Fleet Street, London. This, however, was at the house of a Buckinghamshire man, his uncle, Sir George Croke. His mother was a Bulstrode of Hedgerley in this county, which place we have already visited; his father was Sir James Whitelocke, a judge of James the First's time, who played a considerable part in the constitutional struggles of that monarch's reign and of his son's. He purchased Fawley Court in 1616, and he died here in 1632. His son, Sir Bulstrode, built a chapel with a monument to him and to his wife. It contains the effigies of the pair in marble under a canopy. It is not quite certain whether Bulstrode Whitelocke is buried in the tomb of his parents or at Chilton in Wiltshire, where he lived in later life. In 1642 this house, Fawley Court, was so plundered and maltreated by the King's army under Prince Rupert that Bulstrode Whitelocke never came to live in it again. He describes the disaster in his *Memorials*. Bulstrode's son sold the estate in 1688 to a family of the name of Freeman, who rebuilt the house from a design by Sir Christopher Wren, and they also have a mausoleum in the churchyard. In the grounds of Fawley Court, on the river bank, is the island with a Grecian temple, known to every visitor to Henley Regatta. Next along this bank of the river we note Greenlands, the pleasant seat of Lady Hambledon, the widow of Mr. W. H. Smith of bookstall fame, who was also held of high esteem in parliamentary life. Mr. W. H. Smith enlarged this house which in an earlier form stood a six months' siege by the Parliamentary forces in 1644. To reach the pleasantly situated village of Hambledon we have to travel a short distance in a north-easterly direction. Hambledon is a mile

from Hambledon Lock. Its church has been much restored, but there are some brasses that have been preserved in the usual way, and there is a fine monument of 1633 to Sir Cope d'Oyley, his wife, and their ten children. The children each hold a skull. Francis Quarles, the poet, the brother of Lady d'Oyley, wrote her epitaph :—

In spirit a Jael,
Rebecca in grace, in heart an Abigail ;
In works a Dorcas, to the Church a Hannah,
And to her spouse, Susannah,
Prudently simple, providentially wary ;
To the world a Martha, and to Heaven a Mary.

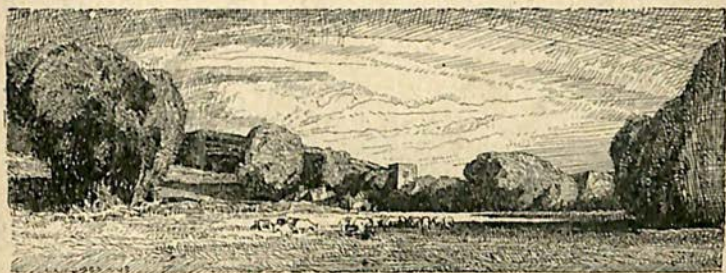
But the real though inconspicuous glory of the church is the Norman font in which Simon de Montfort is believed to have been baptized—but there are sceptics! In the Manor House Charles the First took refuge in 1646. See also Yewden Manor, with its fine yew hedges. The energetic walker will rejoice in a climb up Hambledon Hill.

We return to the river, and our next stopping place is Medmenham Abbey. A few years ago every river-side visitor stopped at an inn here and examined the ruins with the Rabelaisian inscription, *Fay ce que voudras*, but the inn has been converted into a modern house—a private residence—and is not now so easy of approach.¹

Medmenham Abbey was at first but a “cell” to Woburn Abbey. It, however, had abbots of its own in the centuries prior to the dissolution of the monasteries, although, when that crisis arose, it may clearly be said to have already run its course. Henry the Eighth’s commissioners reported : “Monks, 2 ; servants, 0 ; debts, 0 ; woods, 0 ; movable goods worth £1 : 3 : 8 ; and the house wholly ruinous.” Then it became a private house. Its whole interest is concentrated upon its sham canonical occupants in the middle of the eighteenth century.

¹ Sheahan tells us that in his day (1862) it was “divided into several tenements for labourers,”

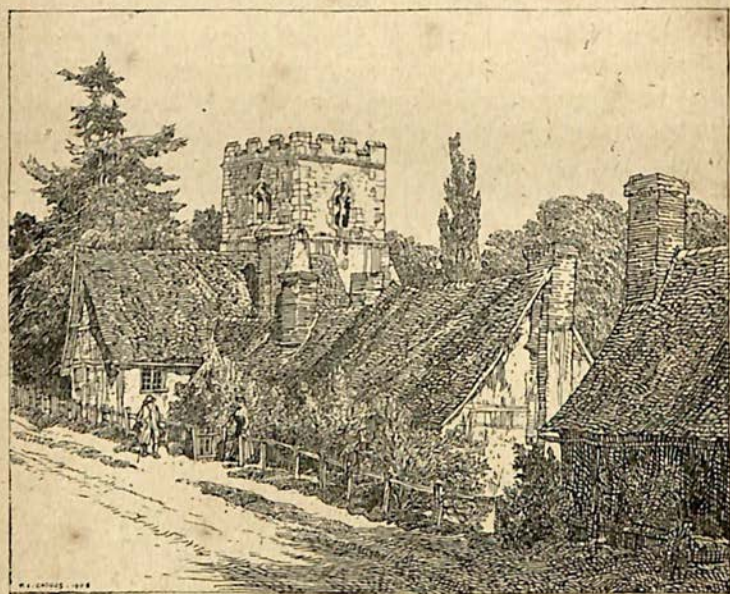
These called themselves Franciscans, from their founder, Sir Francis Dashwood, and their chronicles are the chronicles of the "Hell Fire Club." The best-known account of the Club is contained in *Chrysal*, a popular novel, published in 1783, in four volumes. In the third volume of this work we find the story of wild rites and mysterious orgies that has been generally accepted ever since. We find also the account of the alleged personation of the devil by a baboon, who is let loose among the frightened pseudo-monks. All this is merely the reflection of the current gossip of the day, and is certainly entirely mythical. The so-called "Hell Fire Club" was founded by Sir Francis Dashwood about 1742. He had but just returned



Medmenham.

from Italy, and had had his portrait painted for the Dilettante Society, according to their rules, in fancy costume. He selected the character of a saint, and was painted by Kempton as Saint Francis of Wycombe. Shortly after this, in imitation of the real St. Francis, and no doubt inspired to the idea by his portrait for the Dilettantes, he founded an order which he called The Order of St. Francis of Wycombe. He took a lease of Medmenham Abbey, then in ruins, and carefully restored and enlarged it. He surrounded the Abbey with beautiful gardens, of which we owe a description to John Wilkes, who has been much more largely identified with the Club than the facts warrant. Wilkes's connection with Medmenham only com-

menced in 1762, twenty years after the Club was founded. And then he was, as we know by one of his letters to Lord Temple, only at Medmenham as a guest.¹ It is probable that he was never actually elected to the Club or enrolled as a member. It has been well suggested that if he had been a member he would certainly have had his portrait painted, as did other members. The colours of this neo-Franciscan order



Medmenham.

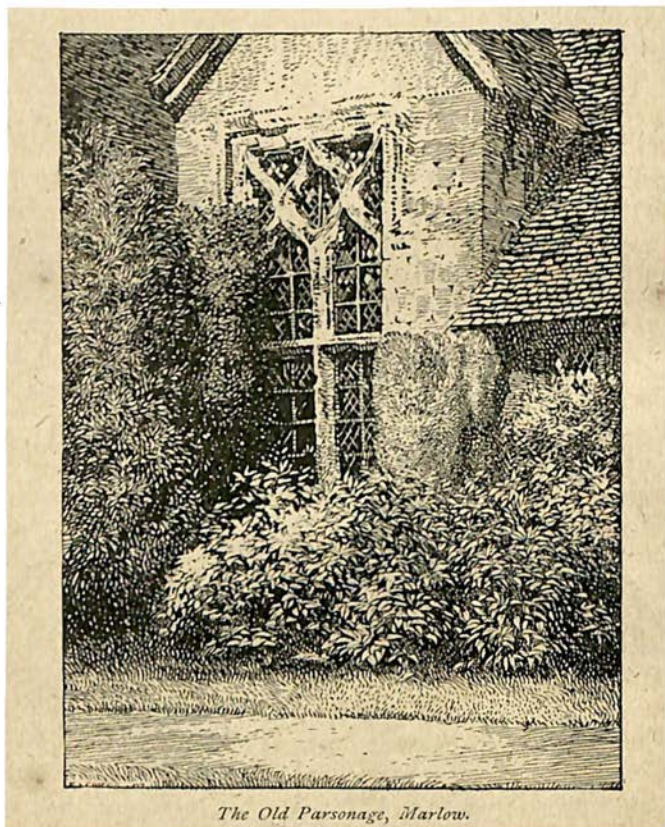
were crimson and blue, and its motto "Love and Friendship," which they wore in their caps in silver letters. Their gowns, as well as their caps, were crimson and blue. They only assumed this garb on rare occasions. The members included Frederick Prince of Wales, then residing at Park Place in the vicinity, and many leaders of the Opposition of that date.

¹ See the *Political Register* of 1767, a letter dated 15 October, 1762.

Almon, in his *Life of Wilkes*, is probably entirely misinformed as to the Club and its membership. He clearly only quoted current gossip. We have already noted the views of Dr. Bates of Little Missenden, who was a member or a guest of the Club before its demise. Wilkes's "cradle" was one of the favourite exhibits at the Abbey for some years, it being one of the popular myths about the Club that the "monks" slept in cradles. Near Medmenham is Danesfield, which owes its name to traces of a Roman encampment in its vicinity. This was the seat of Francis Duffield, the actual owner of Medmenham in the days of the club. Danesfield came later into the hands of a great Roman Catholic family, the Scott Murrays, who may have considered it desirable to purify the neighbourhood from ribaldry. In any case, they gave to Danesfield one of Pugin's last efforts in the way of church-building, and the chapel is considered one of his masterpieces. It long contained the so-called "uncorrupted hand of St. James the Apostle," which, however, we shall now be able to see at Marlow, whither we are fast wending our way.

Great Marlow is certainly a pleasant town, as thousands of boating enthusiasts who have rejoiced in the seven miles' row from Marlow to Maidenhead can testify. The church was built in 1834, the movable suspension-bridge a year later. So that here we have much of modernity; but we may find a picturesque old rectory at the back of the church, and in St. Peter's Street and West Street we find some old houses. Not the least interesting is Shelley's house, in the latter street. The poet came to live here in March, 1817, and he and his wife resided at Albion House, as it was called, until February, 1818. They had been to Marlow in 1816 on a visit to Thomas Love Peacock, whose literary activity is also associated with the place. It was the author of *Gryll Grange* that attracted them here. The year at Marlow was one of great achievement. Shelley wrote a now precious pamphlet, *A Proposal for Putting Reform to the Vote*, by "The Hermit of Marlow," *Laon and*

Cylthna and *The Revolt of Islam*; Mrs. Shelley wrote *Frankenstein*. They were visited by William Godwin and by Leigh Hunt, but not by Byron, although it is so stated upon the house to-day. This house, as we see it in contemporary prints, was not



The Old Parsonage, Marlow.

unlike it is now, although there was but one door then at the side, and it has been divided up into cottage residences. Moreover, West Street in 1817 was a country road, and Albion House was separated considerably from any other buildings;

now the houses run along continuously on each side of it. One of the courteous tenants of the now divided house showed us his parlour, which tradition has fixed upon as Shelley's library, and the garden behind the house where we may still see the "mound surrounded by cypresses and yews with a cedar tree among them" that Shelley saw and described. But there were drawbacks. "What a dreadfully cold place this house is!" writes Mrs. Shelley in September, 1817. "I was shivering over a fire, and the garden looked cold and dismal; but as soon as I got into the road, I found, to my infinite surprise, that the sun was shining, and the air warm and delightful." The summer had been perfect. Shelley, in his boat "The Vaga," had explored the reaches of the Thames, and written much spontaneous verse. "I have often met him," writes a correspondent of Lady Shelley's quoted by Professor Dowden in the *Life*, "going or coming from his island retreat near Medmenham Abbey. . . . He was the most interesting figure I ever saw; his eyes like a deer's . . . his white throat unfettered." But neither Shelley's health nor his wife's could endure another winter under such conditions when Italian skies were available. Still, from the baths of Lucca the poet wrote not long afterwards, "My thoughts for ever cling to Windsor Forest and the copses of Marlow."

The house now bears an inscription on its parapet:—

"This tablet was placed, A.D. 1867, at the instance of Sir William Robert Clayton, Bart., to perpetuate the record that Percy Bysshe Shelley lived and wrote in this house and was here visited by Lord Byron."

The record is a useful one, although Byron never visited Shelley at Marlow. Other literary associations of the little town are with Francis Edward Smedley, the author of *Frank Fairleigh*, who resided at Beechwood, and G. P. R. James, the author of many thrilling stories, whose home may still be found on the Oxford Road. While upon literary associations, it may be worth while to mention that the summer dinners of

the Omar Khayyám Club (founded in 1892) have often been held at the Crown Hotel, Marlow. As far as possible we have excluded the names of the living from these pages, but we may recall that George Gissing, Grant Allen, Harold Frederic and William Sharp among interesting writers, now deceased, have taken part in convivial gatherings at this



Shelley's House, Great Marlow.

inn. They have visited the Shelley house with us, and wandered through Marlow's byways to the lock and weir.

The modernity of the church detracts from its interest ; but in the vestry is the picture of a black and white spotted boy, concerning which we cannot do better than quote Lipscomb :—

This picture was the gift of Mr. John Richardson, a native of Great Marlow, who, having amassed great property in the character of a

strolling-player (and was well-known throughout England, and upon most parts of the continent), purchased the child here commemorated, then an infant, as it is said, for the price of 1000 guineas, for the purpose of exhibiting so curious a phenomenon to the public. Mr. Richardson proved a most benevolent patron to this little orphan, whom he caused to be baptised at Newington, in Surrey, and afterwards educated with the utmost tenderness, until his premature death in 1812, at the age of about 8 years, when he was buried in the church-yard here, and has a gravestone with a long inscription to his memory; while this painting preserves a faithful likeness of this curious and wonderful being, and is a monument of Mr. Richardson's munificence and affection.

There is a monument in the church to Sir Miles Hobart, who was killed by a coach accident on Holborn Hill in 1832. It contains a bas-relief depicting a coach turning over, with the horses running down a hill. The little Roman Catholic chapel built by Pugin is also worth a visit, not only on account of its architectural beauty, but because it contains the supposed hand of St. James. The kindly priest will show you this hand in its metal and glass case. The relic has certainly a marvellous "pedigree"—of no small interest even to the Protestant investigator, who usually despises such things. It is on record in a chronicle—and is not merely legendary—that Paul, Bishop of Altino, a city between Padua and Concordia, abandoned his see about 640, and sought refuge from the Barbarian invasion in the island of Torcello. Among the church treasures of Torcello is mentioned "the *Hand* of St. James." We are left to speculate as to the history of the hand for the first 500 years or so, it is true, but the original hand was probably genuine. Four hundred years later—in 1040—it was brought by Adalbert, Archbishop of Bremen, from Torcello. At his death it was assigned to the Emperor, Henry the Fourth, and it was kept with the Imperial regalia till the death of the Emperor, Henry the Fifth, in 1123, when his widow, the Empress Matilda, daughter of Henry the First of England, brought it to England. The letter of Henry the First giving the hand to

Reading Abbey is among the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum :—

Henry, King of England and Duke of Normandy, to the abbot and convent of Reading, greeting. Know that the glorious hand of blessed James the Apostle, which the Empress Matilda, my daughter, gave me on her return from Germany, I, at her request, do send to you, and give for ever to the church of Reading; wherefore I command you to receive it with all veneration, and that you and they who come after you take care to show it in the church of Reading all the honour and reverence that you can, as is due to so great a relic of so great an Apostle.

When the dissolution of the monasteries took place in the days of a less devout, or shall we say less superstitious, Henry—Henry the Eighth—Dr. John Landon, who visited Reading Abbey, declared that he took away the relics, including the hand of St. James. Mrs. Climenson, the widow of a former vicar of Shiplake, to whom I am indebted for these particulars, writing on this subject in *Memorials of Old Buckinghamshire*, suggests that it is possible that another hand was substituted; but certain it is that in the beginning of the seventeenth century an embalmed hand was found among the ruins of Reading Abbey when they were digging the foundations of the new gaol. It was for many years in the museum in Reading. In 1855 the relic passed into Roman Catholic hands and ultimately came to Mr. Scott Murray of Danesfield; hence its appearance in this little church. The sceptically minded will see a thousand difficulties in accepting this hand as that of St. James. The gaps in its history are certainly very great. But in any case, it is an interesting relic of undoubted antiquity.

From Marlow we pass on to Bourne End. Seymour Court, on the hill above Marlow, is said to have been the birthplace of Lady Jane Seymour, the mother of Edward the Sixth, but the Seymour Court of to-day is a comparatively modern building. Bisham, with its abbey, which has an interesting history, is on our right and therefore in Berkshire. Less than

two miles from Great Marlow is Little Marlow. Here was once a nunnery, but there were only two nuns and four servants here when Thomas Cromwell sent his "visitors." In Browne Willis's time the ruins of the priory were standing. The church has been too much restored to be interesting. It contains a painting of the Flight into Egypt, and a brass plate inscribed to Nicolaus Ledewich dated 1430. In Westhorpe House, near by, lived Sir George Nugent, a general in the Army, who long represented Buckingham in Parliament. He died here in 1849. Westhorpe House was built by James Chase, who was M.P. for Marlow in the reign of William the Third and Anne.

Two miles east of Bourne End is Dropmore, where may be seen one of the most fascinating parks in the county. It is happily open to visitors on three days of each week. This park, of between 600 and 700 acres, was, we are told, a wild common when Lord Grenville purchased it in 1792. William Grenville had associations with Buckinghamshire through his brother, Earl Temple, Marquis of Buckingham, whom we shall meet in our visit to Stowe. But William Grenville was the most considerable figure in his family. He was born in 1759, and held many offices before he—then M.P. for Buckinghamshire—was created Baron Grenville of Wotton-under-Bernwood in this county. He was Foreign Secretary when war broke out with the French Republic in 1793. History has condemned his foreign policy, as it needs must do, but has recognised that when he assisted in the Union with Ireland he was betrayed into believing that Catholic emancipation would accompany or immediately follow that union. That he constantly supported the Roman Catholic claims stands to him for righteousness, as does the fact that he assisted in the abolition of the Slave Trade. He was First Lord of the Treasury in 1806, with Fox as Foreign Secretary. Although Lord Liverpool was then Prime Minister, Grenville was really responsible for the unwarrantable war upon Napoleon

after his escape from Elba, defeating Lord Grey on a division by 166 votes to 44. It was a most interesting career that closed at Dropmore Lodge in 1834. To this fine estate he retired in 1823, and he devoted himself henceforth to tree-planting with marvellous zeal. He was buried at Burnham, where we shall see his tomb. Lady Grenville survived him until 1864, and the estate then went to Grenville's nephew, George Mathew Fortescue, and is still in the possession of the Fortescue family, to whom we are indebted for six volumes of letters and historical documents issued by the Historical Manuscripts Commission. These attractive volumes, indeed, perhaps better than any other works, tell the history of England through many stirring years. The correspondence of the Grenville family at Dropmore is indispensable to the student of the period.

It would be impossible to visit Dropmore without becoming enthusiastic, not so much over the Italian garden, although that is beautiful, or over the wonderful rhododendrons, which in the season are most luxurious, as over the superb exotic trees. There is a fine cedar of Lebanon on the lawn ; there are others scattered through the grounds—400 in all ; there are marvellous pine trees and deodars at every turn. There is a monkey tree planted by William the Fourth, an oak said to have been planted by Queen Elizabeth, and another oak from the tree at Boscabel which is famous in the story of Charles the Second. These last trees are somewhat inconsistent with the story of Grenville's conversion of "waste land" into this wonderful garden. There is also here an arbour formed of stones from Old London Bridge, and a Roman Bath. Altogether, before we leave it all, we are in harmony with Samuel Rogers's verses written at Dropmore in 1831 :—

Grenville, to thee my gratitude is due
For many an hour of studious musing here.
Search where we would, no fairer bowers than these,
Thine own creation.

There is a letter of Grenville's extant to his brother, Lord Temple, in which he says:—

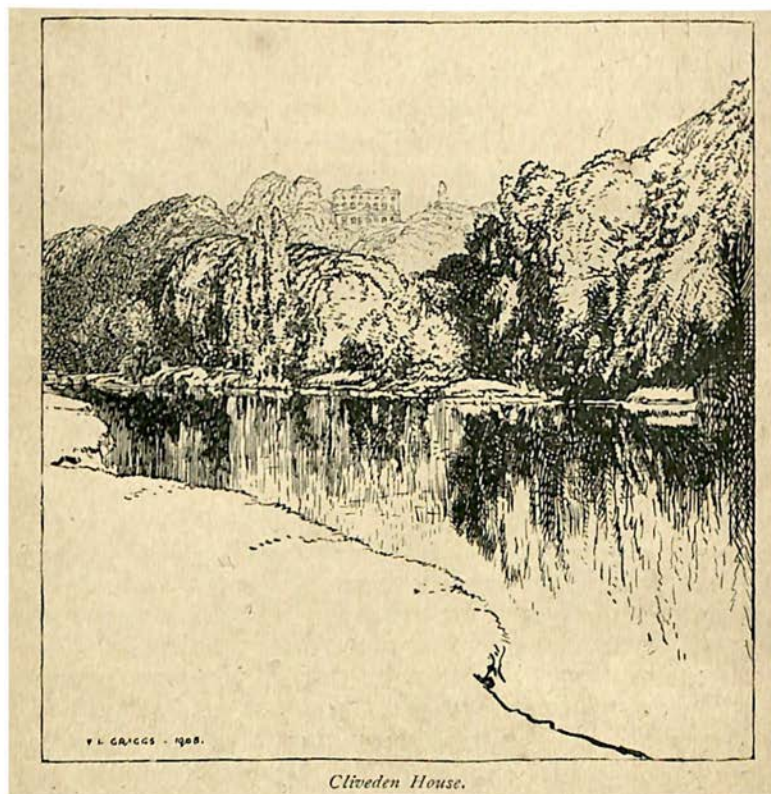
The trees arrived safe at Dropmore yesterday, and we were at their unpacking in the middle of such a fog as I never saw before. They will answer admirably for my purpose, and will make a great figure on my hill in the course of a century or so.

We pass along by the adjoining grounds of Cliveden as we return to the river, and few parts of the Thames are more lovely than where its Buckinghamshire bank is bounded by Cliveden Woods. The house we see to-day high above the bank as we row on the river is a comparatively new one. The original house was built by the notorious George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, the favourite of Charles the Second, who killed the Earl of Shrewsbury in a duel, the Countess of Shrewsbury holding his horse the while disguised as a page. Villiers and the Countess fled to Cliveden. Frederick Lewis, Prince of Wales, the father of George the Third, occupied it for a time, and it was then that *Alfred*, a masque by Thomson the poet, was played here. This masque contained the air of *Rule, Britannia*, composed by Dr. Arne, which was then sung here for the first time. In 1795 the mansion was destroyed by fire through a servant reading in bed. Her candle caught the curtains, and as she became insensible, the poor girl was unable to give the alarm until the flames had spread too far. It was restored in 1830, burnt down again in 1849, and rebuilt in 1851. In our time the house has belonged in succession to the Westminster and the Astor families.

There are three turnings at a cross-road near Cliveden called "Nobleman's Corner," one leading to Dropmore, another to Cliveden, and a third to Hedsor. Hedsor also boasts a park and a mansion, which has been rebuilt since it was designed by George the Third, in 1778, for the Lord Boston of that day. The pretty church is within the park. Its chief interest is in the tablet to Nathaniel Hooke, placed there by Lord Boston in 1801. Hooke, who is best

known in literature as a friend of Pope, wrote a *Roman History*, and published sundry translations from the classics. He was buried in Hedsor churchyard in 1763.

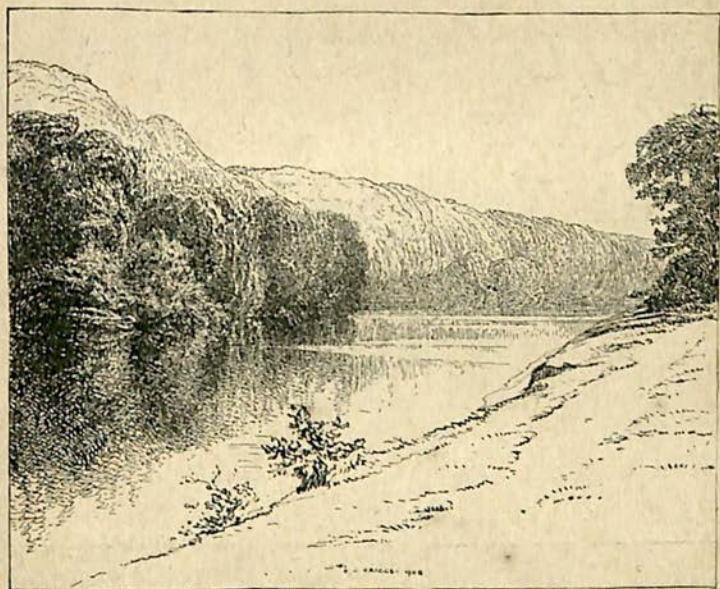
Returning to the river, and passing Cliveden in our boat,



Cliveden House.

we soon reach Taplow, opposite Maidenhead, which is in Berkshire. Taplow needs no description. This is not a guide-book for boating men, who, in any case, know Taplow full well. It is all very modern now, although "Thapeslar" belonged to Bishop Odo in the early Norman days. The

vogue of river picnics has given it importance, and the summer cottage a very enlarged population of a fleeting kind. There are a few half-timbered cottages to remind one of pre-railway days; but even the old church has disappeared—in 1853 it was a picturesque ruin—being replaced by a red-brick structure which dates from 1828. There are some brasses here from the old church, but old brasses have but moderate



Cliveden Reach.

interest when one cannot associate them with definite personalities, and of Nichole de Aumbeldene, who died in 1350, and Rychard Mansfeld, who died in 1465, we know nothing, but both brasses are curious. Taplow Court is in parts an old mansion; part, however, was built by Lord George Hamilton, Earl of Orkney, who fought with William of Orange at the Battle of the Boyne, and afterwards served under the great Duke of

Marlborough at Blenheim, Ramillies, and Oudenarde. Lord Orkney was buried at Taplow. After Taplow we pass Bray on our right. That village of the opportunist vicar is not in our county. There was never any ambiguity about the views of Buckinghamshire men in Stuart times, whichever side they were on.

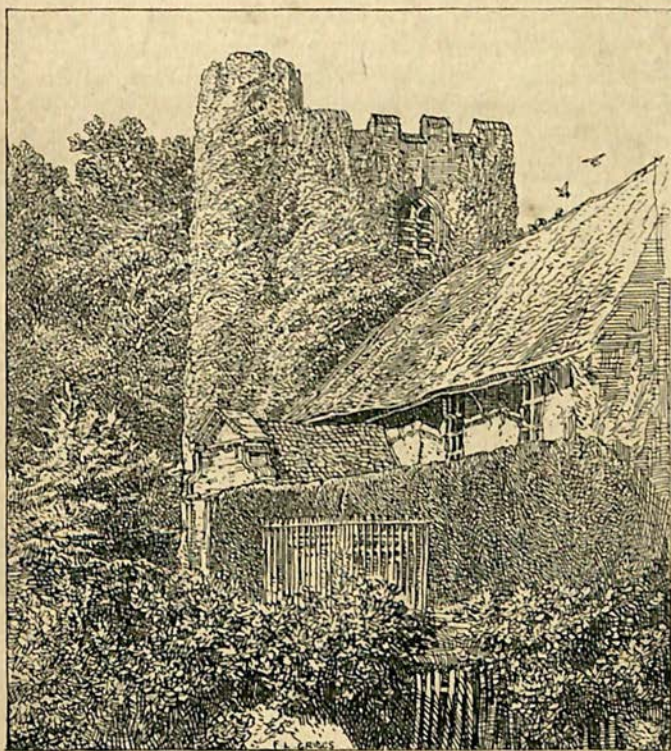
Our next stop is at Boveney, where we see the towers of Windsor Castle across the river in the distance. The church



Boveney Church.

lies in meadow lands surrounded by elm trees, and is bounded by the river. It is a simple little building of stone with a wooden tower. We are here two miles from Eton and three from Burnham. A short walk across the meadows and across a common takes us to Dorney, which has been called Dorney-cum-Boveney. The fine house known as Dorney Court, once much more splendid, is the principal point of interest. The family of Palmer has lived here since 1629. The Gerrard

family held it for the previous hundred years, and there is a beautiful monument in the church with two life-size figures of Sir William Gerrard—who died in 1607—and his wife, who kneel with their seven sons and eight daughters in basso relievos



Dorney Church.

beneath them. There is also a memorial to Sir Charles James Palmer, who died in 1895. The family pew of the Palmers with its tablets to that family is also interesting. The font and the musicians' gallery call for attention. The church is some little way from the village and near the mansion. Dorney

was, in 1578, the birthplace of Richard Montagu, successively Bishop of Chichester and Norwich, and the friend of Laud. There is a direct road from Dorney to Eton, or we may return to the river at Boveney and thence to Eton or Windsor, which so picturesquely face each other on opposite banks. We must give Eton a chapter to itself, and so we hasten on to Datchet, which recalls the adventures of Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. "The muddy ditch at Datchet Mead, close by the Thames side," into which he was thrown in the buck-basket, is now a covered drain. The supposed house of Mistress Page, "The Cuspin," was pulled down in 1860. In Datchet Mead Charles the Second attended horse races. Thus it was the forerunner of Ascot. A mile from Datchet, and nearer Eton, is Black Pots, still known favourably to anglers. Here Verrio, the painter, built a summer-house, and Charles the Second was wont to come to fish. Pope thus apostrophises the Merry Monarch :

Methinks I see our mighty monarch stand,
The pliant rod now trembling in his hand ;

.
And see, he now doth up from Datchet come,
Laden with spoils of slaughter'd gudgeons home.

We are more interested in two earlier visitors, for Izaak Walton used to fish here with his host, Sir Henry Wotton, the Provost of Eton. There is more than one reference to Dorney in *The Compleat Angler*. Sir Henry Wotton when Provost had an annual visit from Walton, and in the last year of his life—in April, 1639—writes to Izaak in cheerful anticipation of his "ever-welcome company in this approaching time of the fly and the cork." Wotton, indeed, eulogises his friend as "a most dear lover and frequent practiser of the art of angling." Sir Henry Wotton built a fishing-house here which has long since disappeared.

CHAPTER XX

HORTON AND WRAYSBURY: THE HOME OF JOHN MILTON

WE shall now perhaps bid farewell to the Buckinghamshire Thames, for from Datchet we shall be tempted to the short walk by road to Horton, and thence to Wyrardisbury, or Wraysbury. A little further on we are at an angle where the Thames all but touches four counties. We are leaving Berkshire and Windsor Park behind us, and the Thames runs between Buckinghamshire and Surrey, and is soon separating Surrey and Middlesex. Runnymede, near Wyrardisbury, famous in connection with Magna Charta, is in Surrey, but Magna Charta Island, the scene of the great signing, is in Buckinghamshire. Staines, the nearest town, is in Middlesex.

But at Horton, although we are so near the borders of three other counties—for Windsor Park, in Berkshire, seems close beside us—we feel ourselves to be in the very heart of our county; and it seems to be well-nigh its crowning glory that Milton's most significant home was here, the home of six impressionable years, and the inspiration of much of the best of his early poems. "Far too much sentiment has been wasted over this kind of association"—one of the guide-books is good enough to tell us. As if there were any associations quite so entrancing to the lovers of good books and great men.

It may be that we shall reach Horton by rail from London to Colnbrook, for many will visit Horton for its association with Milton who may not have found it convenient to see it when on a visit to these beauties of the Thames. Colnbrook is seventeen miles from London, and a little over a mile from Horton. It consists mainly of one long street, and we are still struck by the number of inns in that street. The oldest is the Ostrich Inn, which, however, cannot be so old as to be concerned with the tradition that in the reign of Edward the First it was the rendezvous of a murderous gang who cast their victims into the river at a spot which is still known as Colnbrook Churchyard. On one occasion thirteen bodies were taken from this inn to be thrown into the river. When they arrived at the river the gang discovered that one body was missing, and they quarrelled over the loss. A Wraysbury fisherman, "who," says Gill, the historian of Colnbrook, "had been laying eel-wheels, said, 'if you are so disconcerted about the loss, throw in one of yourselves.'" The men shot some arrows at the fisherman, and one lodged in his boat. He carried it with him back to Colnbrook, when a little boy from the Ostrich Inn claimed the arrow as belonging to his father, and thus the gang were discovered. At the "Catherine Wheel," Henry the Eighth and Queen Catherine stayed; at the "George," Queen Elizabeth slept when brought a prisoner from Woodstock to Hampton Court in 1558. It is said that the wheel of her carriage came off. The "White Hart Inn" is associated with the *Ballad of the Three Cooks of Colnbrook*. The church at Colnbrook only dates from 1849. Finally, it may be added that Colnbrook is mentioned in Froissart's *Chronicles*, where we learn that four Ambassadors from Philip, King of France, were sent to Edward the Third at Windsor in 1337 to do homage for the Duchy of Guienne. "They dynd in the Kynge's chamber, and after they departed, and lay the same night at Colebroke"—which would seem to show our monarch in an inhospitable light.

As we have said, the little village of Horton is not much more than a mile from Colnbrook. Our interest in that village is entirely associated with John Milton, and without the loving industry and enthusiasm of the late David Masson this chapter would have more imperfections. In his *Life of Milton*, Masson has reconstructed with remarkable skill from the Parish Register the Horton of Milton's day. Milton lived here for five years and nine months, between 1632 and 1638, and at intervals after his return from abroad. Here are his own words :—

At my father's county residence, whither he had returned to pass his old age, I, with every advantage of leisure, spent a complete holiday in reading over the Greek and Latin writers: not but that sometimes I exchanged the county for the town, either for the purpose of buying books, or for that of learning anything new in mathematics or in music, in which sciences I then delighted. I had passed five years in this manner, when, after my mother's death, being desirous of seeing foreign lands, and especially Italy, I went abroad with one servant, having entreated and obtained my father's consent.

Milton had just left Cambridge, being nearly twenty-four years of age; his father, the scrivener, had, we must assume, just retired from business in London. The poet was fortunate in that father, whose clear vision enabled him to excuse the son from other tasks than learning when he had decided not to become a clergyman. These years at Horton were to play a large part in making Milton a great poet. Ten of his most important poems were written at Horton, including *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, the *Song on May Morning*, *Comus* and *Lycidas*, and it is easy to find local colour in most of them. We are sure that he has Windsor Castle and his own environment in mind when he writes in *L'Allegro* of

Meadows trim, with daisies pied;
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide;
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The cynosure of neighbouring eyes.

And surely in such lines as the following we find much even to-day at Horton to connect us with the individuality of Milton :—

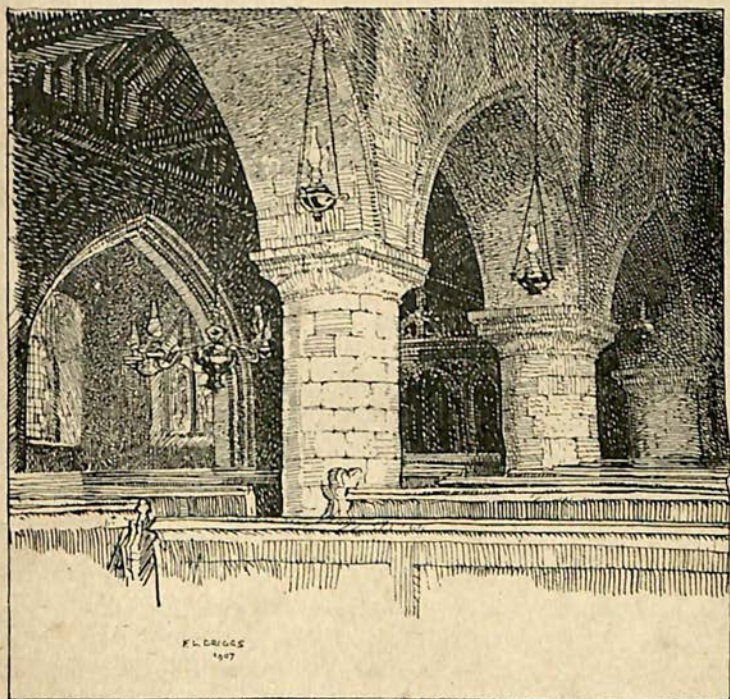
The tufted crow-toe and pale jessamine,
The white pinks and pansy freaked with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk rose and the well-attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head.

Mr. Masson has also introduced us to the neighbours of the Milton family. The Bulstrodes lived in the manor house. They were cousins of Whitelock Bulstrode. At the rectory was Edward Goodal. Both manor house and rectory of that day have disappeared, as has the Milton House, which stood near the church, and was pulled down about 1798. Many were and may be are still shown a house which was built, it is said, on the site of the Milton House. "In the garden of this house," says Masson, "there was shown, within living memory, the remnant of an apple-tree, under which, according to the innocent style of local legend about such things, Milton used to sit and write." But if nothing personal concerning Milton remains, his name is not undiscoverable at Horton. In the church, separated from the road by an acre of picturesque churchyard, with ancient yew trees said to be 700 years old, we find an old Norman arch and an ancient font. We see a stained glass window placed here in 1883, not in the least in commemoration of Milton, as is sometimes said, although it has a light of John Milton writing *Paradise Lost*. But our principal, and indeed our sole, interest must be in the tomb of Milton's mother. Attempting to recall in his ingenious way the tragedy in the Milton household and the sad scene by the graveside, Masson says :—

Where Milton then stood, and where the aged widower stood, and others with him, the visitor to Horton Church may now stand also, and may read, on a plain blue stone laid flat in the floor of the chancel, this simple

memento of the old funeral: "*Here lyeth the body of Sara Milton, the wife of John Milton, who died the 3rd of April, 1637.*"

Only two other associations of the name of Milton with Horton was Mr. Masson able to discover, one the record of the



Horton Church.

death of "an infant sonne of Christopher Milton, gent, buried March ye 26th." This was in 1639, and in 1640 there is recorded the baptism of "Sarah, ye daughter of Christopher and Thomasin Milton." When this last event occurred, Milton was living in London. He had gone on a Continental tour in

March or April, 1638, and in July, 1639, he was back in England. His father and his brother Christopher remained in Horton until 1640, when they removed to Reading. John Milton doubtless paid them occasional visits, but his association with Horton was slight after 1638. Before Milton went on tour to Italy he had a notable interview with the Provost of Eton, Sir Henry Wotton. The ex-Ambassador to Venice and to other Courts was the best man in England to give the young poet letters of introduction abroad. Horton was less than five miles from Eton. We have therefore the record of a walk through Hatchet and along the Thames to the College, and of a most hospitable reception by Wotton and by "the ever memorable" John Hales, whom Wotton would call his "walking library." Then we read of a gift to the Provost of a copy of *Comus*, followed by a letter of appreciative criticism by Wotton, who admired its "Doric delicacy."

There is a footpath across the meadows from Horton to Wraysbury. This place is called Wyrardisbury on the ordnance map, and in Domesday Book it is called Wirecesberie, but the inhabitants may be thanked for calling it Wraysbury. In 1862 one Gordon Gyll, a resident, wrote a history of this parish which extends to 200 pages. Lipscomb, again, gives an illustration of the interior of the church, which leaves an impression of a rich treasure-house of monuments. The visitor of to-day, apart from the angler, with whom it is a favourite resort, will find Wraysbury but moderately interesting. The church has been much restored, and the monuments must, many of them, have disappeared. There is a brass to John Stoner, in the dress of an Eton scholar, but who John Stoner may have been apart from the fact that he was "the sone of Walter Stoner, Squyer," is not recorded. Lipscomb gives more illustrations to Wraysbury than to any other village. We see the church, unrecognisable to a modern visitor, the antique porch, Magna Charta Island as it was in 1834, and also in 1844.

We also see Ankerwycke Priory as it was in his day. Lipscomb, it may be mentioned, died here in great poverty, and Gordon Gyll, one of his successors among the historians of Buckinghamshire, rescued his body from a pauper's grave. There are still ruins to be seen of the Priory, which was a small nunnery of the time of Henry the Second. In the British Museum there is a deed of one of the Mother Superiors, with seal attached dated about 1300. A wall or two with windows still remain, and the present owner, Mr. A. H. Benson, has unearthed ruins which plainly indicate a more extensive building than has hitherto been assumed. Mr. Benson can also recall the skulls of nuns being dug up in the garden. There may still be seen in the grounds of Ankerwycke House the old yew tree, measuring 31 feet 6 inches in girth at 3 feet from the ground, beneath which, according to tradition, Henry the Eighth was wont to meet Anne Boleyn. That tree, which seems to be growing even now, Mr. Benson expresses his willingness to show to the visitor. When Lipscomb wrote his description of it the tree was only 28 feet round at the same level.

Here we are in Magna Charta land. Between Datchet and Wraysbury is a farmhouse called King John's Hunting Lodge, and King John may have had a house on the site. The present house is quaint, old-fashioned and interesting. The table upon which King John is said to have signed Magna Charta was long preserved here. It is now on Magna Charta Island and is obviously a fraud. There is a footpath from Wraysbury church to the ferry at Magna Charta Island, where a stone commemorates the signing of the Great Charter. But as Runnymede is in Surrey it is the fashion with all writers on Buckinghamshire to leave any description of that great incident in our history—the wresting from King John of a charter that laid the foundations of English constitutional liberty—to the historians of Surrey, and we reluctantly do the same. Magna Charta Island is,

however, now joined to the mainland on the Buckinghamshire side of the river. The stone known as the Charter Stone bears this inscription :—

Be it remembered that on this Island, 25th June, 1215, John, King of England signed Magna Charta ; and in the year 1834, this building was erected, in commemoration of that great and important event, by George Simon Harcourt, Esq., Lord of the Manor, and the High Sheriff of this County.

CHAPTER XXI

ETON COLLEGE

WE may visit Eton from many parts of our county. Indeed, it is quite a short distance from several of the places that we have already seen. It is less than two miles from Slough, for example. It is safer, however, to assume that it would be visited as a rule direct from London. We take train therefore to Windsor from Paddington. The station is close to the noble Castle. Instead of crossing Windsor Bridge direct, it is pleasanter to enter the gates of the Castle and ask the way to the Hundred Steps. From these steps we have a beautiful view over the Thames and the College. We pass down these steps direct to Windsor Bridge, which joins Berkshire to Buckinghamshire. The long straggling street of Eton leading from the bridge to the College is still picturesque in spite of much new building. It is doubly interesting if one walks through it with an old Eton boy who will recall to you the various changes that have been made in the interval of twenty years since he paced the streets daily, and who will point out to you the shops that still survived that had ministered to his requirements in boyhood. Only an Etonian, for example, can call the attention of a stranger to an inn known as the "Tap," famous in latter-day College annals as the home of the Long Glass. This is a little beer-house which carries no sign in front, and it is on the left-hand side of the High Street as we approach

the College. It is privileged to supply the Upper School boys with beer, and it is the possessor of a singular glass a yard long which boys compete with one another to empty with miraculous celerity. There is a book kept by the proprietor of the "Tap" in which is recorded the exact number of seconds which various boys have taken to drink the Long Glass full of beer at a gulp, sixteen seconds being among the recorded achievements. Replicas of the glass are in demand among old Etonians all over the world. Copies of it have been sent to Ceylon, to South Africa, and to Australia, and on the fourth of June, the great day which Eton keeps in honour of George the Third's birthday, the College is toasted in the Long Glass in the remotest parts of the globe.

We hasten on, and when across Barnes Bridge we find ourselves at Keate's Lane on our left. It is named after the famous headmaster. Down Keate's Lane we see on our right the School of Music, which was the old Racket Court of the College; on our left is the Lower Chapel, which has been built for the accommodation of those junior boys who are crowded out of the more venerable structure. It was completed in 1891. Just before reaching the chapel we note, also on our left, Dame Evans's House, the last house that had a "damie" to superintend it. On this side of the lane also we have the Museum of the College. Turning back again we are at the College, but we note first the various masters' houses where the oppidans are boarded, and we note also before entering the College the new Memorial Hall, consisting of a Concert Room and domed Library, to which the School Library is to be transferred.

The School Library at the time we write is simply two old class-rooms. Here the boys are allowed to read to their hearts' content, and to borrow books. This library contains the original manuscript of Gray's "Elegy," and a French translation of "The Bard," also in the poet's handwriting. There is a letter of Lord Nelson's asking for a holiday for the boys. By the time that many have read our book, these and many

treasures of the Library will have been transferred to the new Memorial Buildings, where there is a new library modelled upon the Bodleian at Oxford. By the side of it is a Concert Hall, which will include among its decoration Mr. Sargent's portrait of Miss Evans, the last of the dames, as we have said, to control one of the houses in which dwelt the smaller boys. Here also is a bust of Dr. Warre, one of the most popular of headmasters, and now the Provost of Eton. Hitherto the boys have never had the advantage of a really adequate building for entertainments or Speech Day. The new hall will seat 1,200 people, but as there are at the moment 1,000 oppidans and 70 collegians in the school, even this hall seems scarcely large enough to accommodate the boys and their friends on Speech Day. The Memorial Buildings also include an interesting Egyptian collection that has been given to the College.

Facing these new Memorial Buildings is the great College that has played so fine a part in the history of England by training so many of its most brilliant sons. We enter the quadrangle, known as the School Yard, and in front of us we see Francis Bird's statue in bronze of the Founder of the College, Henry the Sixth. This was erected in 1719. Here if we are present at the right moment, we may hear "Absence" called; some of the masters read from a roll-call, to which the boys must make prompt answer. This check upon the lads being within bounds is made twice a day in the summer and once in the winter. We note that the collegers or "tugs" wear gowns, and that the oppidans do not. On our right as we enter the School Yard is the Chapel, against the buttresses of which the game of "fives" was first played. Now there are special fives courts for the game and the walls of the Chapel are sacrosanct. As we stand in this quadrangle the Upper and Lower School are at the back of us and to our left, the Chapel is on our right, while the Provost, Vice-Provost, and Fellows reside in the chambers facing us or in the

cloisters beyond. We may pass through an arch to a second quadrangle to reach these cloisters, which are devoted largely



School Buildings, Eton.

to the Fellows. On the left is the Provost's garden, on the right is the Library and Dining Hall. Here also we shall find the house of the Headmaster, for he now elects to reside in

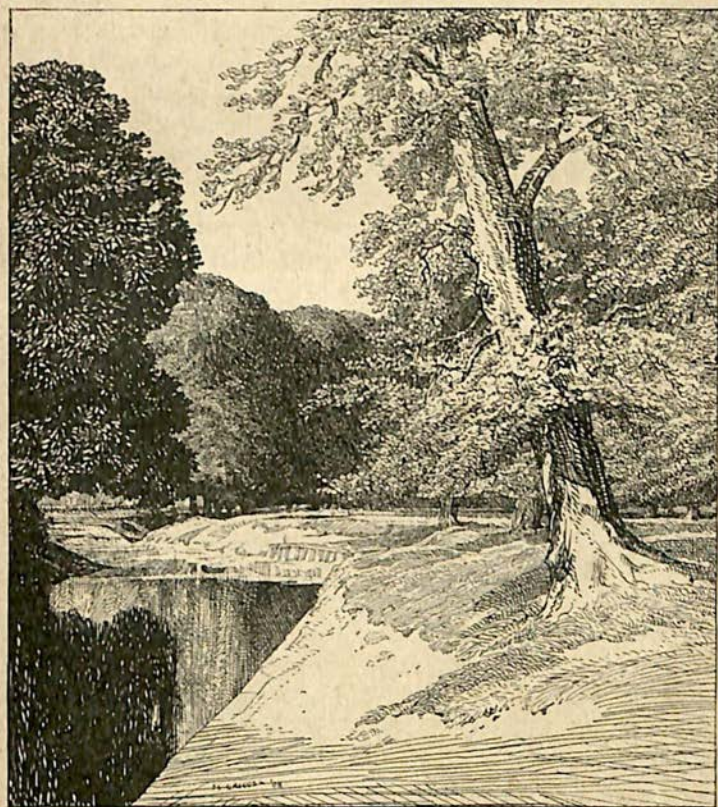
the cloisters instead of in one of the houses outside the gates as formerly. It was an old Etonian, who had not outgrown his boyish love of mischief, who once took King Henry's sceptre and substituted a birch rod, but it was restored with an apology. More success attended the same humorist's attempt upon the whipping block and birch of Upper School. With the assistance of two companions he removed these symbols and conveyed them to London. "The block," says Sir H. C. Maxwell Lyte, the best of Eton's many historians, "was for a time the official seat of the president of the Eton Block Club, a club in London for which no man was eligible who had not been flogged three times at school." In this second quadrangle, or cloisters, is the Dining Hall for collegers, the majority of the boys, that is to say, the oppidans, dining in their respective houses. This Dining Hall, which was entirely restored in 1858, is decorated with the portraits of many famous old boys, and a portrait of George the Third is also hanging here. Opposite the Dining Hall is the Collège Library, a pleasant room reserved for Fellows and under the authority of the Vice-Provost. Here under glass many curiosities of literature are preserved. There is a prayer book that once belonged to Queen Mary, there is a first folio "Shakspeare," and there is a Mazarin Bible. With more local interest do we handle a copy of our first English comedy, "Ralph Royster Doyster." The author of it, Nicholas Udall, was made headmaster of Eton in 1534 and was described as "the best schoolmaster and the greatest beater of our time." In one glass case may be seen the School Charter, dated 1447, and in another we notice the will of Henry the Sixth, dated 1477, by which the College was much benefited.

Returning to the School Yard, we visit the fine College Chapel and admire its admirable proportions. It is a replica of King's College, Cambridge. Both were founded by Henry the Sixth, but more elaboration was given to the Cambridge building. A hundred alterations and renovations have been made since the

fifteenth century, but the Chapel still retains, in spite of some errors of judgment, its singular mediæval beauty. The painting by George Frederick Watts of "Sir Galahad," for example, which hangs in the choir, the gift of the artist, beautiful as it is, is quite out of place here, and had better have been relegated to the Audit-room or some other building. There is a tapestry in the choir representing the "Star of Bethlehem." This was executed by William Morris from a design by Sir Edward Burne-Jones. As to its suitability to this particular place opinions will differ, although there will be no difference of opinion as to its singular beauty. There is a recumbent effigy of Dr. Hawtrey, the headmaster who succeeded Keate, and opposite is one of Dr. Murray, who was tutor to Charles the First. Outside the antechapel is a memorial statue of William Waynflete, the first headmaster, and there are also statues or busts of subsequent headmasters or provosts.

Leaving the Chapel, we once more cross the School Yard to visit the lower class-rooms or Lower School. This is in the left-hand corner as we stand with our back to the Chapel. Here the first thing that meets the eye is the flogging block, at which the younger boys have to kneel to be birched. We believe that the time will come when this and the flogging block in Upper School will be carefully kept out of sight. One notes in Lower School the well-worn desks with their many indications that generations of boys have used them and have used their penknives also. A staircase leads to Upper School, which is much more interesting. The room was designed by Sir Christopher Wren. Here all around us through this long room are busts of many of the boys, who, as men, have achieved fame. William Pitt and Charles Fox, Walpole and Fielding, Hallam and Gladstone are all here, and, strangest of all in such company, the poet Shelley. The oak walls are covered with the names of old boys, not only in Upper School, but on the staircase by which we have approached it and in the headmaster's room at the other end of the hall. The

earlier names were amateur work. Shelley's signature is here, and Gladstone's and many another. Then came the mechanical age when a skilful workman carved the names for a considera-



A Corner of the Playing Fields, Eton.

tion. At the present time nearly every boy as he leaves the school pays twenty shillings to have his name inscribed, but only the staircase is available for further names, unless a boy wins a scholarship that entitles him to be inscribed in the

headmaster's room, or unless his father or grandfather was there before him, in which case a boy may claim to have his name cut somewhere near his father's. Lord Dalmeny's name, for example, is cut next to that of an earlier Dalmeny, in whom we recognise the present Lord Rosebery. Through Upper School we pass to the headmaster's room. Here we find the Upper School block, the successor to the one that was stolen or conveyed away sixty-five years ago. Happily flogging is not now so common as in the days of Keate and Hawtrey. Keate's desk is still pointed out to the curious visitor.

Thus far, it may be, we shall have formed a fairly clear impression of the great public school that has been a nursery of statesmen, of soldiers, of the makers of Empire. We must, however, also see the grounds devoted to cricket or football—that is, to the “wall game.” Whoever accompanies our party is bound to remind us that the Duke of Wellington said that “the Battle of Waterloo was won in the playing fields of Eton.” The Duke meant, of course, that here the qualities of endurance were acquired that made good soldiers. It would have been more truthful to have said that the Battle of Waterloo was won through the temporary illness of Napoleon and through his incomprehensible blunders. Wellington admitted that the fight was a “close shave.” It was one morning in 1818, when visiting the school to see his two sons, that the Duke made the remark that it is so difficult not to quote. A few boys in the School Yard cheered him as he passed. At this time Dr. Goodall was Provost and Dr. Keate was headmaster. We would feign enumerate the headmasters and provosts of Eton, all of whom have a history, and sometimes a very interesting one. We have already referred to that delightful man, Sir Henry Wotton, as the friend of Isaac Walton. We mention him again because he was Provost in 1624. His appointment was one of the last, as it was one of the best, acts of James the First. The great Lord Bacon was a rival candidate, but Wotton, through the intervention of James's favourite, Buckingham, secured the

post, and held it for fifteen years. "He was," Isaac Walton tells us, "a . . . cherisher of all these youths in that school in whom he found either a constant diligence or a genius that prompted them to learning." Sir Henry Wotton erected the double row of wooden columns that are still standing in Lower School. Walton pictures him as—

"That undervaluer of money the late Provost of Eton (a man with whom I have often fished and conversed), a man whose foreign employments in the service of this nation, and whose experience, learning, wit and cheerfulness, made his company to be esteemed one of the delights of mankind . . . the man was also a most dear lover, and a frequent practiser of the art of angling; of which he would say 'twas an employment for his idle time, which was then not idly spent, for angling was, after tedious study, a rest to his mind, a cheerer to his spirits, a diversion of sadness, a calmer of unquiet thoughts, a moderator of passions, a procurer of contentedness.'"

Of the many distinguished Provosts, perhaps the most original appointment was that of Richard Allestree, who had fought as a royalist soldier at the battle of Edgehill. It is said that Charles the Second challenged one of his courtiers to show him an uglier man than himself, that the courtier produced Allestree, and that the King conferred upon him the vacant office. Allestree built, at his own expense, the Upper School.

The headmaster who most lives in the memory at Eton is Dr. Keate, because we have Keate's Lane to remember him by, and his desk is pointed out to us in Upper School. When Goodall became Provost in 1809 John Keate succeeded him as headmaster and he held the office until 1834. To many Keate's name only suggests the floggings that he so frequently inflicted, for it was an age in which the administration of that punishment was more universal than at present. Keate on one occasion flogged twenty boys, after which their comrades threw rotten eggs at him. He sent for the assistant-masters and flogged sixty more. To read some accounts of his career one would imagine that he was never engaged in any

other pursuit than flogging the boys. Sir Francis Doyle, indeed, tells us that "he had no favourites, and flogged the son of a Duke and the son of a grocer with perfect impartiality."



In the Playing Fields, Eton.

That he flogged too much is indicated by many an anecdote. There is for example, that famous story of his comment on the Sixth Beatitude: " 'Blessed are the pure in heart.' Mind that; it's your duty to be pure in heart. If you are not pure in

heart, I'll flog you." But when we read of the rowdiness against which Keate had frequently to contend we are compelled to admire his courage. One pupil, Kinglake, the historian of the Crimean War, afterwards said that "although little more than five feet in height, in this space was centred the pluck of ten battalions," and Kinglake goes on to tell us that Keate had "a really noble voice." Within the limits of the classical education accepted at that time he was a good scholar and a great instructor. When Keate retired he was succeeded by Dr. Hawtrey. Unfortunately it is not within the scope of this brief impression to tell the story of Eton's headmasters, of its provosts, or even of its illustrious pupils. The subject has filled many volumes and will continue to fill many more. The busts of many illustrious Etonians worthily adorn Upper School, but their names are in no small measure the history of England and of the Empire. The historian of Buckinghamshire, then, will glory in the fact that during their most impressionable years these boys breathed the air of this favoured county. It may be in any case that the visitor to the College will think most of the words of one who was not an Empire-builder, a statesman, or a soldier, but a poet. Thomas Gray's *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* must ever come into the mind as we approach the place :

"Ye distant Spires, ye antique Towers,
That crown the watery glade,
Where graceful Science still adores
Her Henry's holy Shade ;
And ye that from the stately Brow
Of Windsor's Heights th' Expense below
Of Grove, of Lawn, of Mead survey,
Whose Turf, whose Shade, whose Flowers among
Wanders the hoary Thames along
His Silver-winding way."

Perhaps the best modern glimpse of Eton is one afforded by the author of "Ionica." William Cory had been an Eton boy and became one of the masters under Dr. Hawtrey in

1845. He presents the school from the interior as few of the many writers upon it have been able to do. The strain and trouble involved in the education of youth are admirably represented in his journals and letters. "I can do hardly anything as a teacher or as a ruler of boys," he says in 1848, and yet we find him still here in 1872. Then he retired on account of health and we find him writing: "I break my heart every day in the partings." When he has left he writes pathetically to a friend: "I have undergone a very strange wounding . . . I feel a wish to hear children laughing." The picture of him with his boys round the fire reading Cowper's poems is one to be remembered. His biographer, now the present Vice-Provost of Eton, has given us a hundred impressions that recall a strenuous, conscientious teacher, honestly striving to raise the boys in his charge to his own high level by intelligent sympathy. Not only in his letters but in his poetry did Cory show his devotion to Eton College:

" These courteous strivings with my peers,
And duties not bound up in books,
And courage fanned by stormy cheers,
And wisdom writ in pleasant looks.
And hardship buoyed with hope, and pain
Encountered for the common weal,
And glories void of vulgar gain,
Were mine to take, were mine to feel."

CHAPTER XXII

BURNHAM BEECHES : THE GRAVE OF THOMAS GRAY

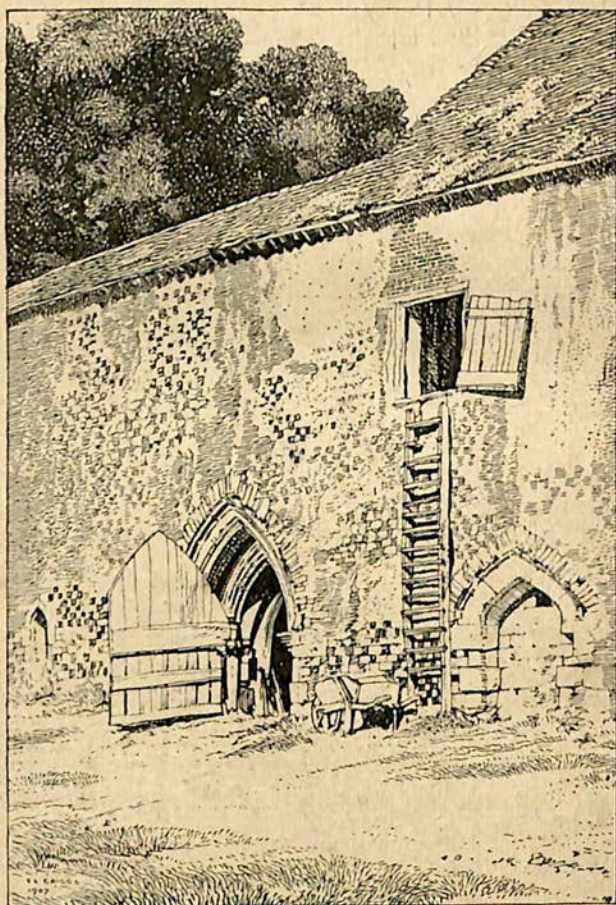
THE favourite method of visiting Burnham Beeches was formerly by the Great Western Railway to Slough, whence wagonettes have for long years now taken thousands of visitors to this picturesque corner of England. To-day there is a station called "Burnham Beeches" two miles from the woods. It was the railway that made the town of Slough. The original village was called Upton-cum-Chalvey, now practically swallowed up in Slough. The church at Upton, restored in 1851, has brasses to members of the Bulstrode family, one being in memory of Edward Bulstrode, squire of the body to Henry the Seventh and Henry the Eighth. In the tower is a monument to Sir William Herschel, who is buried in Slough church. He was born in Hanover in 1733, and was an organist at Halifax in Yorkshire when he commenced the mathematical and astronomical studies that made him famous. He lived both at Datchet and at Slough while making some of the astronomical discoveries associated with his name. He died at Slough in 1822.

It has been suggested that Gray had Upton church in mind and not Stoke Poges in the "ivy-mantled tower" of his *Elegy*. There is a tombstone in the church with the inscription: "Here lies the body of Sarah Bramstone of Eton, spinster, a person who dared to be just in the reign of George the Second." Her friends

were evidently ardent Jacobites. There is a fine Norman doorway, and there is a yew in the churchyard that is said to be from 600 to 700 years old. Upton-cum-Chalvey had a population of 1,000 in 1801 and has with Slough a population of about 12,000 to-day. Slough was described by Lipscomb in 1847 as "a small hamlet in the parish of Upton-cum-Chalvey" and as "principally interesting from having long been the residence of Dr. Herschel." The only thing interesting about the Slough of to-day, apart from the house once occupied by Sir William Herschel in the Eton Road, is its failure to get its name changed to Upton Royal. Slough had a moment of fame in 1845 in connection with the early use of the telegraph. A man named Tawell poisoned his sweetheart in the neighbourhood and escaped by train. The police telegraphed his description to London and he was arrested on his arrival at Paddington. This was a novelty then. Fowler tells us very fully the story of Tawell's iniquities. Sir Francis Head has recorded that, travelling along the line months afterwards, as he neared Slough Station "a respectable-looking man in the corner fixed his eyes on the apparently fleeting wires and nodded to us as he muttered aloud, 'Them's the cords that hung John Tawell!'" Salthill where Tawell had lived, less than a mile from Slough, is more celebrated as the centre of the long-abolished Eton Montem. Here the Eton boys came in procession and kept high festival for many succeeding years of the eighteenth century, begging salt-money on the highway in order to spend it on the glories of the day. The festival finally disappeared in 1847. From the hamlet of Salthill we soon reach Crippenham, once the palace of kings, now a tiny village. Then we give a moment to Burnham Abbey, which has relics of its former glory. Thence we drive to Burnham and Farnham Royal through the famous avenues of beeches, and, crossing the high road to Beaconsfield, we may visit Fulmer and Denham, and then travel back, visiting Stoke Park, Stoke Poges and Langley before again reaching Slough. To do that journey comfortably in one day,

allowing time fully to enjoy the Beeches, we require a motor-car. At the date of the Norman Survey recorded in Domesday Book, there were two royal palaces in Buckinghamshire, one at Brill, the other at Cippenham. Brill we have already visited, and, scanty as is our knowledge of its palace, it is still scantier as to Cippenham. But certainly some of the Mercian kings resided here, and some of the earlier monarchs of the Conqueror's line. In an account of the domestic expenses of Edward the Second is a record of payment to "seven watermen for bringing the Kyng in a skoot or barge to Cyppenham from Shene where the Lady la Despensar resided." It requires some energy and direction, even with the assistance of the guide-book, to discover Burnham Abbey. On the way we pass Huntercombe, a house long occupied by a family of that name. So long ago as 1480 the Skydmeres held the manor of Huntercombe. The Abbey was founded in 1265 by Richard, King of the Romans and Earl of Cornwall, brother of Edward the Third. The charter of foundation was dated from Cippenham. It was for Benedictine nuns, and when the Abbey was dissolved in Henry the Eighth's day, the surrender was signed by the abbess and nine nuns. All we now see are some lovely architectural fragments imbedded in a farm and its surroundings. We are permitted to wander at will among the farm-buildings, and we see a noble ecclesiastical doorway, while even the very stables have Gothic windows, that recall the stables at Hatfield House, once the old palace where Queen Elizabeth was a prisoner. It is possible to trace out much of the old nunnery, the ruined refectory, the Lady Chapel, and the nuns' burial-ground. A mile from the farm we come to Burnham, where we are three miles from Slough and three from Maidenhead, and, what is of more importance just now, exactly a mile from the Beeches. There is in the church a monument to George Evelyn of Huntercombe, dated 1657, and his wife, dated 1661, now almost undecipherable. From Lipscomb, however, who deciphered it seventy years ago, we

may learn that this Evelyn came from Ditton in Surrey, and that his wife came from Catledge in Suffolk. There is a hand-



Burnham Abbey.

some monument to one Justice Willes, with a medallion in profile, supported by a female figure seated, the scales of

justice falling. Willes was Solicitor-General and then a judge of the King's Bench. He died in 1787, and we trust that he had all the virtues that his epitaph ascribes to him. Edward Eyre was buried here in 1631, and his tomb tells us that he was the owner of the manor of Allands in East Burnham.



Burnham Abbey Farm.

Most important of all is the Grenville tomb, which tells us that here rest :—

“William Wyndham Lord Grenville. Born Oct. 21, 1759. Died Dec. 12, 1834. Elizabeth Countess of Carysfort. Born July 10, 1757. Died Dec. 21, 1812. The Rt. Hon. Thomas Grenville. Born Dec. 31, 1755. Died Dec. 17, 1846. Anne Lady Grenville. Born Sept. 10, 1772. Died June 13, 1861.”

There are a window and reredos, erected under the direction of Anne Lady Grenville. "In loving memory of her husband and of her sister and brother: her remains were laid beside them in the vault under this transept." Happy are they who can pay a visit to this little place in the company of Mrs. Grote's pleasant book, *Some Account of the Hamlet of East Burnham*, by a late resident. This book was afterwards reprinted in her *Collected Papers*. Mrs. Grote, the wife of the historian of Greece, here boasts that her ancestors belonged to Buckinghamshire two centuries earlier, residing at Middle Clayden and Steeple Clayden even to the beginning of the nineteenth century. She tells us much about the Eyre family, the last male representative of which to live at Huntercombe House being Thomas Eyre, who was born in 1661. One of his sons went to live at East Burnham, where he died in 1786. He left his house to a daughter, the estate going, however, to a nephew who came to live in a cottage near by. It was to this cottage—East Burnham Cottage—that Richard Brinsley Sheridan brought his bride, Elizabeth Linley, when he returned from Flanders, and after the runaway marriage at Marylebone church. There are letters in the biographies written from here, and Mr. Walter Sichel, Sheridan's latest and best biographer, gives lines written by the newly wedded Mrs. Sheridan from these "favourite bowers":

" Ah, Sylvio, dost thou now bestow
A thought on Laura's pain?
Will thy fond heart in transport glow
When here we meet again
* * *

For then each anxious care shall cease,
All jealous doubts remove,
And virtue shall obtain great peace
To dwell in Burnham Grove."

It was in 1838 that Mrs. Grote and her husband took possession of East Burnham Cottage "with a garden and eleven acres of woodland." They soon added other lands,

which they purchased from Lady Grenville, the widow of the famous statesman who had extended his property at Dropmore even to this point. At East Burnham Cottage the Grotes lived until 1851, and they then built a small Elizabethan house which they commenced to occupy in 1853. This was at first called East Burnham Park. Here the Grotes resided until 1858. It was at East Burnham Cottage that the earlier volumes of the *History of Greece* were written. The first two volumes were published in 1846. In 1847 Grote visited Mendelssohn at



Burnham Beeches.

Interlaken and began an acquaintance which brought the great musician to England and to East Burnham—to History Hut, as the new house came to be called as the *History* approached completion. Mrs. Grote erected a stone to Mendelssohn in the garden of Grenville Lodge, only a fragment of which now remains. The twelfth and last volume was finished here in 1856. Here Alexis de Tocqueville visited the pair in 1857. "This distinguished gentleman," says Mrs. Grote in her *Personal Life of George Grote*, "took a singular liking to our

cottage in the Park, and rambled about for hours with us, quite absorbed in the spectacle of English rural life." In 1858 the Grotes gave up History Hut and terminated their association with Buckinghamshire. Grote died in London in 1871.

We are now at Burnham Beeches, which cover 400 acres, and a visit to which is a delightful experience. They were purchased by the Corporation of London in 1883, and they are now systematically intersected by roads called Lord Mayor's Drive, Victoria's Drive, and the like. Some of the old trees are incomparably grand, in spite of the pollarding or lopping to which they had in old times been subjected, it is said by Cromwell's soldiers in the Civil War. The poet Gray often wandered in these woods. We may, however, see several villages before making our way to Stoke Poges and to the grave of that poet. One sign-post will lead us to Farnham Royal, another to Fulmer and Denham. At Farnham Royal we are about a mile and a half from Stoke and three miles from Slough. It is a pleasant but not a particularly distinguished little place. Its greatest interest is in the name of Royal, which derives from the Domesday Survey, when Bertram de Verdon held the Manor from the Conqueror by the service of finding a glove on the day of the Coronation and putting it upon the King's right hand. He had also to support the King's right arm on the same day during the time that the royal sceptre was in his hand. Bertram went on a Crusade, died at Joppa, and was buried at Acre. An old antiquary named Jacob Bryant, who wrote an account of Early Egypt and the Shepherd Kings and an *Analysis of Ancient Mythology*, and who resided at Cippenham, was buried in Farnham Royal church in 1804, and there is a mural tablet to him. There is no monument to commemorate Edward Chandler, who was Bishop of Lichfield and Durham in succession and died in London. Why he was buried at Farnham Royal and never honoured with a tomb is not recorded, especially as he was accused of dying "shamefully rich." His children died before him and

this may explain the matter. There is a monumental brass to Eustace Mascall, who died in 1567, being "pistile reader" in Windsor Castle. He is said to have directed the building of Christ Church, Oxford, under Cardinal Wolsey's directions. Fulmer records the fact that Fulmer Place was built by Richard Eskrigge, the great-grandfather of Sir Richard Owen, and that the great zoologist was often here in his boyhood.



Burnham Beeches.

Its church contains a fine tomb to Sir Marmaduke Darell, represented in armour by the side of his wife. Sir Marmaduke, who owned a much finer "Fulmer Place" on the site of the present smaller house, was, his tomb tells us, "Servant to ye famous Queen Elizabeth in her warres both by sea and land and after in her Household." He was also "cofferer to King James and Charles, and favoured by all these renowned princes, and employed in matters of great trust for the space of fifty years."

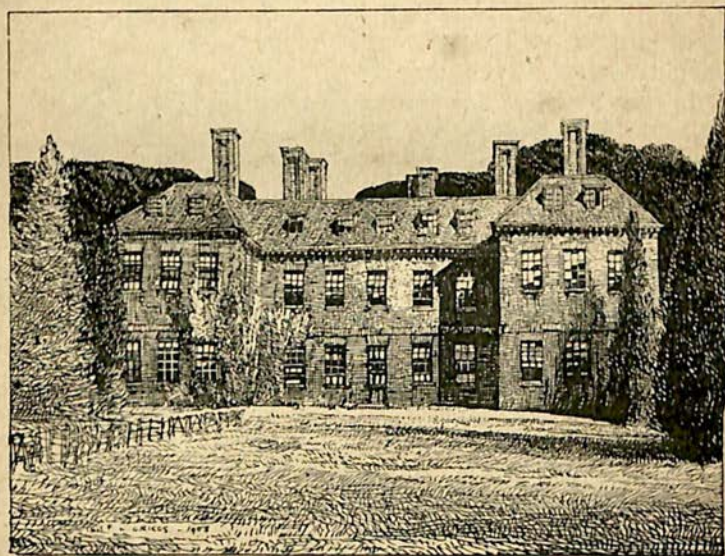
Denham is yet another mile and a half on our way. Denham is a pretty village, which has been 'made the subject of perhaps the largest topographical book with which a place of its size has ever been honoured. This is *The History of Denham*, by the present rector. There is much that is irrelevant in these 500 pages, much also that is to be found in Lipscomb's great book, but much also that helps to assist in understanding the pretty village with its church of many monuments, its two remarkable houses, Denham Place and Denham Court, and its comfortable inn, the "Swan," with its beautiful wistaria and its sign, which, with the many changes that, as the historian of Denham reminds us, the house has undergone, still swings in the wind. Perhaps the most interesting things in *The History of Denham* are the reprints with translations of sundry wills of the owners of its old houses and also the many illustrations. An added interest to Denham Place is that it is still occupied by the family that have held it for hundreds of years, a circumstance rare enough even in this unprogressive county. A part of the house is a chapel that contains a stained-glass window entirely taken up with the coats of arms of the family. The first is a John Hill of Edward the Third's reign, but the earlier Hills were of Somersetshire. It was Sir Roger Hill, who became M.P. for Amersham, that purchased the manor of Denham in 1670, and built the house in 1676. The elder daughter of Sir Roger, Hester Hill, inherited the estate, and she left it to her sister Abigail, whose daughter married Lewis Way. The Way family was of Somersetshire and Devonshire origin, but the family has lived at Denham through all the succeeding generations, recalling in the permanence of its home the Verneys at Claydon. There is a village tradition that Sir Roger Hill secreted the body of a footman, whom he is said to have murdered, in a secret room of Denham Place, now destroyed. Benjamin Way, his grandson, who was M.P. for Bridport and Sheriff of Buckinghamshire, was a friend of Captain Cook.

The present courteous owner of Denham Place still possesses a knife or dagger in a case that once belonged to the famous navigator. There are beautiful reliefs round the cornices of the drawing-room and billiard-room, and some very fine tapestry in the hall.

Old as are the associations of the present Denham House or Place, it is clear that a much older house once stood upon the same site, or near it. This was the house of Sir Edmund Peckham, who lies buried in the church. He was a great personage in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. We pass through the village to that church, happy if we are able to persuade the custodian of the church to deliver up the keys on our way, and thus save us the walk to the locked church and back again to the other end of the village. The most striking monument is that to Sir Edmund Peckham and his wife in the chancel. We see the sculptured form of a knight in full armour, who died in 1564. The monumental tablet to his son, Sir Robert, is even more interesting, for Sir Robert died in Rome in 1569, and is buried there in the church of St. Gregory. He, however, bequeathed his heart to Denham. It was buried here in 1586. And so we see the heart sculptured on the top of the heraldic tomb. Before Elizabeth's long reign had closed the Peckham family, however, had ceased to be associated with Denham. Their successors were the Bowyers, who reigned here for a hundred years, first as tenants of the Peckhams at Denham Place, and later as the owners of Denham Court. And so through the days of the earlier Stuarts Sir William Bowyer was the most important personage in Denham, and the family resided at Denham Court until 1813. We find their tombs in the church with the Peckhams, the Hills, and the Ways—all families closely associated for a long period of English history with this quiet village. There are old brasses, too, in the church, one to Dame Agnes Jordan, Abbess of Sion, dated 1544, and one to Leonard Hurst, a priest, dated 1560. Note the old yew trees in the

churchyard, and the small charity school just outside, with an inscription which tells us that it was built by Sir William Bowyer in 1721.

A fine avenue of lime trees leads from the church to Denham Court, for so long the home of the Bowyers. The pleasantest association of the place is with Dryden, who was a friend of the reigning Sir William Bowyer, who had married



Denham Court.

a kinswoman of his wife's. The poet declared that here "Nature had conspired with art to make the garden one of the most delicious spots in England." These gardens are bordered by the River Colne, and there are ancient fishponds. There is a letter from Dryden at Lambeth Palace, and printed in Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, written from Denham Court, in which he says that "his Virgil is succeeding in the world beyond its desert or his expectation." Dryden says, also, that

he is "writing a song for St. Cecilia's Feast, who, you know, is the patroness of musick." Thus Denham adds one more to the long list of literary glories associated with Buckinghamshire.

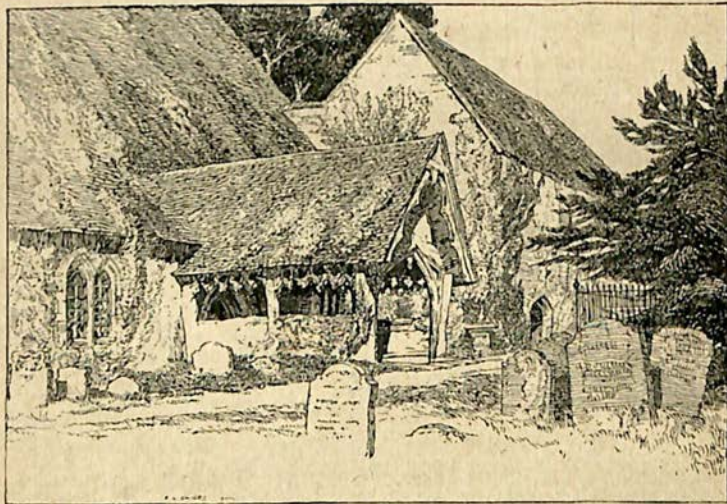
Of more general interest is the claim of Denham Court to have been one of the refuges of Charles the Second in his flight. It is certain that this was not after the famous flight from Worcester, for Charles never could have come anywhere near Denham on that occasion. It is possible, as the latest historian of Denham suggests, that the legend grew out of the fact that the Bowyers had property in the county of Dorset, and they may have helped him there. It is also possible, as suggested by the same writer, that it was after the Battle of Edgehill, in 1642, that James Fleetwood, who was chaplain to Charles the First, carried off the young princes, Charles and James, and that he may have taken them to Denham, as Fleetwood had his home in the same county—at Chalfont St. Giles. Be that as it may, here are the pictures at Denham Court to commemorate a real or an imaginary event. There are three panel paintings. There were originally four, but the one representing Lady Bowyer leading the dethroned monarch into his hiding-place has been lost. One represents the prince dressed as a fowler, another as a scullion in the kitchen, and a third as hidden behind the panel with a dead turkey hung outside to take off the attention of a bloodhound brought by the soldiers to track him.

Perhaps the most oft-visited spot in England next to Stratford-on-Avon, so far as literary associations are concerned, is Stoke Poges churchyard. It is a favourite resort with the visitors to Burnham Beeches. And since the advent of the motor-cab that has proved a not infrequent method of seeing the picturesque locality that will ever be associated with the poet Gray. It is a delightful excursion in the summer-time, when the churchyard abounds in well-kept rose-bushes. As we approach the churchyard we are reminded of the poet by a stately, if tasteless, monument—a large sarcophagus, supported

on a square pedestal with inscription on each side. One of these records that—

"This monument in honour of Thomas Gray was erected A.D. 1799 among the scenery celebrated by the great Lyric and Elegiac Poet. He died in 1771 and lies unnoticed in the adjoining Church-yard under the tombstone on which he piously and pathetically recorded the interment of his Aunt and lamented Mother."

It was John Penn, who lived at Stoke Poges in 1799, to whom



Stoke Poges.

we owe this monument. At the end of the churchyard, close by the wall at the east end of the church, we find the simple tomb under which Gray and his mother lie buried. He inscribed it to "Dorothy Gray, the careful, tender mother of many children, of whom one alone had the misfortune to survive her." Since John Penn wrote the epitaph on the outlying sarcophagus an inscription has been placed under the window exactly opposite the tomb which tells us that Gray lies here. To the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* we shall have to return in a moment.

There are no fewer than three houses of considerable importance at Stoke Poges—Stoke Court, the Old Manor House, and Baylis House. Of these Stoke Court interests us most, for it was the home of Gray. In his day it was called West End Cottage; but in spite of enlargement and reconstruction, the poet's room still exists. In Gray's time, when he came here to spend his college vacations, he described it as "a compact box of red brick." In a letter to his friend Mason, from Stoke Poges, in November, 1753, eight or nine months after his mother had died, he writes :

"Stoke has revived in me the memory of many a melancholy hour that I have passed in it, and, though I have no longer the same cause for anxiety, I do not find myself at all the happier for thinking that I have lost it . . . I shall wish to change the scene as soon as ever I can."

Not far away is the Old Manor House, which recalls the ancient glories of Stoke. It would seem that John de Molyns, a knight of Edward the Third's Court, married Egidia, daughter of Robert Pogeys, of Stoke Pogeys, and Edward gave him as a kind of wedding-present the right to have a six days' fair yearly, and also to make a Castle here. Sir John Molyns afterwards became the King's treasurer. An old canopied tomb in the church is supposed to be Sir John's, but there is a brass to his son, "Willm's Molyns," dated 1425, his wife "Margia" by his side. Sir William left an only daughter, who married Sir Robert Hungerford, and their great-grandson became the first Earl of Huntingdon. We may trace the manor in the hands of this family until the reign of Elizabeth, when it was for a time in the occupancy of Lord Keeper Hatton. Gray thus describes the house in his *Long Story* :

"In Britain's Isle, no matter where,
An ancient pile of building stands;
The Huntingdons and Hattons there
Employ'd the power of fairy hands
To raise the ceiling's fretted height ;

Each panel in achievements clothing,
Rich windows that exclude the light
And passages that lead to nothing.

* * *

Full oft within the spacious walls
When he had fifty winters o'er him,
The grave Lord Keeper led the brawls,
The seals and maces danced before him.

About A.D. 1600, the great lawyer, Sir Edward Coke, bought the place, and he entertained Queen Elizabeth here in 1601. Coke is at once famous and infamous: famous by his *Institutes*, in the preface to which he refers to his "much honoured allies and friends of Buckinghamshire," and infamous by the ruthlessness with which he conducted many a State trial in the reign of James. One cannot easily forgive him for his brutality at the trial of Walter Raleigh. "I *thou* thee, thou traitor," is a memorable phrase that he used on that occasion. Raleigh was avenged in a measure before Coke's days were ended. His wife separated from him, and, as he said, he was "alone on earth, suspected by his King, deserted by his friends, and detested by his wife." It may be added, however, that some of Coke's misfortunes were due to his principles and not to his faults. These principles were founded on strict legality. He was not compliant enough when Charles the First came to strife with his Parliament, so that in a sense Coke also was one of the martyrs for liberty, of which Buckinghamshire has given so many to the nation. In 1634 his papers were seized by Sir Francis Windebank, Secretary of State to Charles the First, on account of the attitude that he had taken up in Charles's Parliament of 1629, and three days later he died. He was buried in Titteshall Churchyard, Norfolk. In 1647 Charles the First was brought here a prisoner by the Parliamentary army. The house afterwards came into the hands of Sir John Gayer; then of his son Robert Gayer, who, being an ardent Jacobite, refused to see William the Third when he called upon him, and tradition relates that

the monarch had to drive home again without obtaining admission to the mansion.

In 1760 Thomas Penn, a son of the great William Penn, bought the estate. He died in 1775, and his son John, in 1789, rebuilt the house, not, by the way, on the same site, erected the monument to Gray that we have seen, and also, in 1800, a tall column to Coke, with his statue, and the statement upon it that "he died in the ancient Manor House of which the remains are visible from this spot."

Among the treasures of Stoke Manor House is part of the trunk of a tree which came from America. It was presented to John Penn by some Quakers of Pennsylvania. It was the elm tree under which the treaty with the North American Indians was signed by William Penn. After John Penn's death, the Manor House was bought by Henry Labouchere, Lord Taunton. A third house of importance at Stoke Poges is Baylis House, once the seat of the famous Lord Chesterfield, and afterwards of the Godolphins. Henry Martin, who was one of the judges at the trial of Charles the First, was born at Stoke Poges. Oliver Cromwell once in the House of Commons called him *Sir* Harry Martin. He replied, "I thank your Majesty ; I always thought, when you were King, that I should be knighted." He died a prisoner in Chepstow Castle.

. Let us return to the church, in which we shall find a canopied tomb supposed to be that of Sir John Molyns. There is a brass to another Sir John, dated 1425. There is the Hastings Chapel to remind us that Lord Hastings, once the owner of the manor, was descended from the Molyns family, and that his son was the first Earl of Huntingdon. There is a monument designed by Flaxman to his friend Nathaniel Marchant in 1816. A "cloister" of modern creation leads from the church to the original manor-house, a gamekeeper's lodge in the sixties of last century and now a concert-hall. The discarded home of Coke has, however, served a less mean purpose. It was for a time the studio of Sir Edwin Landseer. The stained-

glass windows of the cloister were removed there from the old hall before it was abandoned to these various uses. You cannot walk through this "cloister" from the churchyard, but you may approach the fragment of the old manor associated with Coke through the stable by the side of the Farnham road. But it is the lovely churchyard with its associations with an unforgettable poem that most delight us at Stoke Poges—a spot we leave with unusual reluctance.

Gray wrote his *Ode to Spring* when on a visit to his uncle and aunt Rogers at West End Cottage in 1742, and in the same year and in the same place he wrote the *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*, which he had first intended to call *Eton College, Windsor, and Adjacent Country*—a dreadful title. The famous *Elegy*, however, has a more varied origin. Mr. Edmund Gosse has reminded us that it was "begun at Stoke in 1742, continued at Stoke immediately after the funeral of Gray's aunt, Miss Mary Antrobus, in November, 1749, and finished at Cambridge in June, 1750." It was thus apparently inspired by three deaths. Gray's uncle, Jonathan Rogers, died at Stoke Poges in 1742 and was buried in Burnham church. His friend West died also in 1742, and his aunt died here at Stoke in 1749. These events were seemingly the reasons for the poem, which was published by Dodsley in 1751 and did more for Gray's fame than all his other work. In 1753 Gray's mother died, and he attended her funeral at Stoke. She was buried in the grave that we have seen. Gray himself died at Cambridge in 1771, and his remains were carried to Stoke Poges and placed in the same tomb with his mother and aunt. It was a quiet funeral for the author of one of the most popular poems in our language. The mourners were four in number—Gray's niece, "a shop-keeper at Cambridge," who was her brother-in-law, and two obscure but kindly young men from the same town. We can but contrast with this the thousands of annual visitors to this simple grave—all inspired by love of one short-but immortal poem.

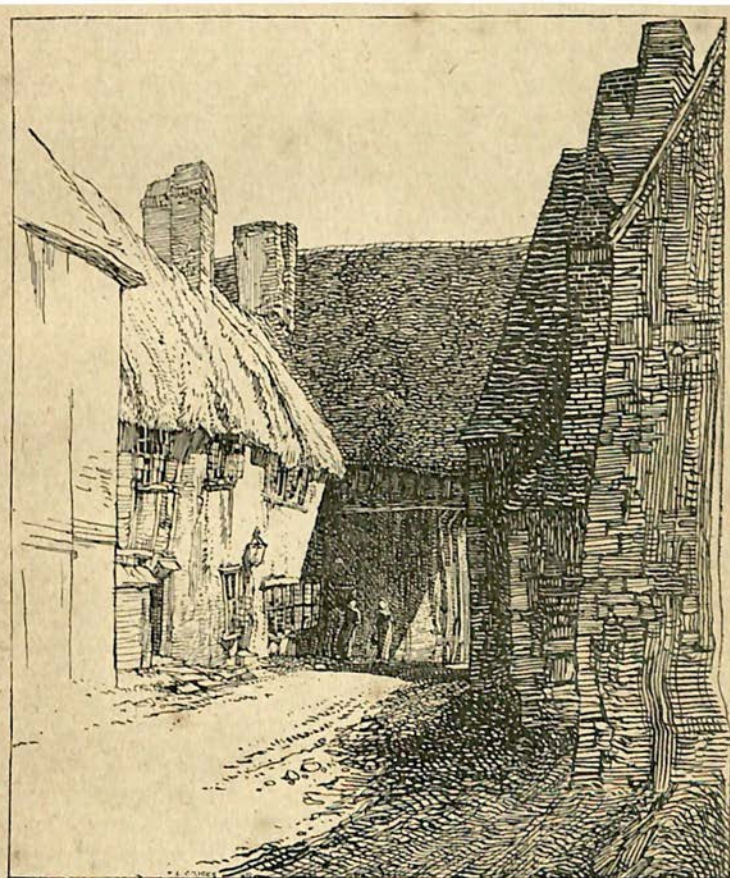
Ditton is a hamlet of Stoke Poges, and its park is associated with the memory of Sir Ralph Winwood, who died in 1617. He built the house on the site of one erected by Sir John Molyns in the time of Edward the Third. That house, however, was destroyed by fire in 1812. Winwood was Secretary of State and M.P. for Buckinghamshire in 1614. Elizabeth Duchess of Buccleuch rebuilt the house in 1813. It now belongs to the Montagus of Beaulieu. We may return to Slough from Stoke Poges through Langley Marsh, where the church has many tombs, not one of any special signification, but Sir John Kederminster, the lord of the manor, founded by his will in 1631 a library "for the benefit as well of members of the said town and such other in the County of Bucks as resort thereto," which to-day looks much as it did three centuries ago. Langley Park, two miles away, contains a fine collection of pictures and a natural history collection.

CHAPTER XXIII

BUCKINGHAM AND STOWE

THE town of Buckingham has a literature all to itself. Browne Willis, for example, the antiquary whose name has several times appeared in these pages, lived at Whaddon Hall, which we have already visited, and in 1705 he was elected M.P. for Buckingham. His *History and Antiquities of the Town, Hundred, and Deanery of Buckingham* is a classic from which later writers have drawn copiously. He lived through the great fire that occurred here in 1725, which entirely destroyed the ancient aspect of the town. Still, the Buckingham that we see to-day has much of an old-world air, although to this the church does not contribute. The church is situated on a mound upon which Buckingham Castle is believed to have stood, and it was erected here in 1777, when the old church was destroyed. The older church lost first its spire; then its tower fell in. The church of 1777 was restored and renovated by Sir Gilbert Scott, the famous architect, who was a native of the adjacent hamlet of Gawcott. The church is absolutely destitute of interesting monuments, but it has in the vestry illustrations both of the earlier church and of this church before its restoration. The church has also a wonderful manuscript bible with missal decoration, "given to the Chancel of Buckingham Church by John Rudyng in 1471." This was long chained to a desk in the church, but was once stolen, and

many years afterwards it came into the hands of Browne Willis. At his death it was purchased by the then vicar of Buckingham,

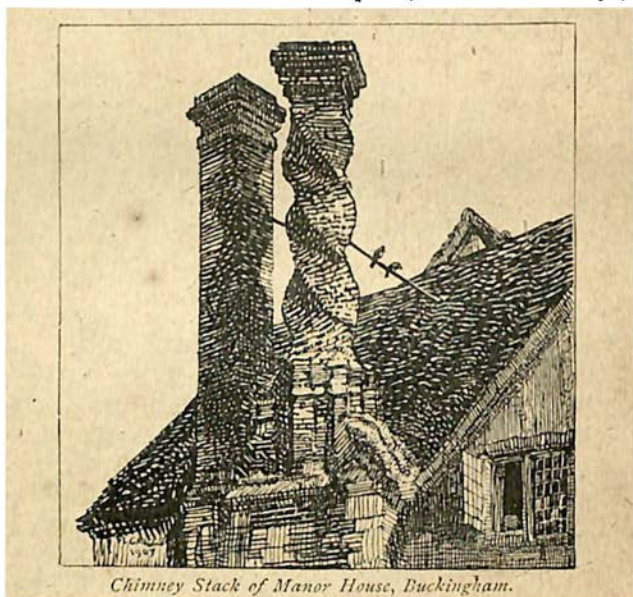


Fleece Yard, Buckingham.

and is now once again the property of the church. The manuscript is in various handwritings, and some of it is clearly thirteenth-century work, while the rest of it is of the fourteenth

century. There is a copy of Raphael's "Transfiguration" in the chancel.

But the church is the least interesting building in Buckingham, as we see when we glance from the mound upon which it stands over the red roofs of the town. There is the Fleece Inn with its yard buildings of overhanging thatch and its ancient gateway ; there is the Manor House with its queer, twisted chimneys, the



Chimney Stack of Manor House, Buckingham.

like of which can only be found at Hampton Court ; there is the former vicarage, in Church Street, dating from Charles the Second's time, with a wonderful carved black marble mantelpiece ; there is a fragment of the old Market Cross to recall to us where the old church once stood ; there is Castle House, where Cromwell probably stayed during the weeks that he was in Buckingham in 1643. On the 8th of March in that year, he wrote from Buckingham to Sir Samuel Lake, Governor of Newport Pagnell, "to raise 300 foot to march to Buckingham

upon Monday morning." Curiously enough, Carlyle, in his *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, has not a single letter from Buckingham, and has indeed a blank in the correspondence during the very weeks in which Cromwell was in this county. Charles the First was here for four days in 1644, in spite of the fact that Aylesbury and Newport Pagnell were garrisoned for the Parliament. Prince Rupert was also here. Castle House was owned in 1592 by one John Lambard, or Lambert, and it was held by his son, William Lambard, in 1611. It still bears upon an oak overmantel in the dining-room the date 1619, and the initials W. L. and M. L.—William and Mary Lambard. Sir Edward Richardson, a sound loyalist, who owned the house when both Cromwell and Charles came to it in two successive years, must have found his position as host very trying when he entertained Cromwell.

As we shall be wise to sleep two nights in one of the hotels of Buckingham, and may be quite comfortable there, we shall have time to wander into the side streets and search out these houses, with the help of the local guide-book. More in evidence immediately upon our arrival is the attractive Market Place, with the castellated building erected by Lord Cobham in 1748 as a county gaol, and now used as a fire-brigade station; the town-hall, a red-brick building with a clock-tower; the Royal Latin School, with an old Norman doorway; and the Old Bull Ring, most picturesque of buildings. The town of Buckingham boasts a long line of "worthies," but not one of those enumerated by the old county histories is as interesting, to our mind, as Robert Hill, who was long known to fame as "The Learned Tailor of Buckingham." His step-father was a tailor of this town, and he was apprenticed to him. With the first money he earned he bought a Latin Grammar, and he ran errands for the boys of the Latin Free School in exchange for help in his studies. Later he acquired Greek, and then Hebrew. He died in 1777, aged 78,

never having been able to turn his learning to any remunerative use, but, as a contemporary eulogist says, "though buried in obscurity and scarce subsisting by his labour, he was perfectly contented, extremely modest and diffident in his discourse."

Buckingham naturally suggests the title that it has given in



The Bull Ring, Buckingham.

successive generations to successive families. Henry the Sixth, in 1445, created Humphrey Stafford first Earl of Buckingham. He was killed at the Battle of Northampton in 1460, and the Wars of the Roses found another victim in his grandson and successor, who was beheaded in 1483. Henry the Seventh restored the son, Edward Stafford, to the title and made him a Duke; but Duke Edward was beheaded by Henry the Eighth on Tower Hill in 1521. This Duke founded Magdalene College, Cambridge, first called Buckingham Hall. James the

First revived the long extinct title for his favourite, George Villiers, whose story we know. He was assassinated in 1628. The second and last duke of this creation was that Villiers who was long a favourite of Charles the Second, the courtier-poet, who perhaps lives to-day only by Dryden's lines—

“A man so various that he seemed to be
Not one but all mankind's epitome ;
Stiff in opinion ; always in the wrong,
He's everything by starts, and nothing long ;
But in the course of one revolving moon,
Was Chymist, Fiddler, Statesman, and Buffoon.”

Buckingham died, the last of his race, in poverty and disgrace in 1687, and the title was not revived until George the Third made George Grenville Temple, Earl Temple, Marquis of Buckingham in 1822: his son, Richard, was made Duke of Buckingham and Chandos. Lipscomb pointed out that had the will of Henry the Eighth been carried into effect this family would have had the throne of England. The title of Duke of Buckingham became extinct with the fourth of this creation, who died in 1889. The beautiful seat of the Temples—Stowe House—is now owned by the daughter of the last Duke of Buckingham, the Baroness Kinloss, of Morton Lodge, Maids Moreton. On the death of the Duke the place was leased to the Comte de Paris, who died here in 1894.

It is a two mile drive through a fine avenue to Stowe House, so long associated with the family of Temple. The estate was purchased by John Temple, who was High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire in 1596, and died in 1603. His son, Thomas, was created a baronet in 1612, and died in 1625. This Sir Thomas Temple had for wife Hester Sandys, concerning whom we have already, at her birthplace at Latimers, quoted Fuller's quaint remark as to her seven hundred descendants. There are others who state that Lady Temple had more than 1200 descendants before her death in 1656. One son, Sir Richard Temple, who was M.P. for

Buckinghamshire, built Stowe and laid out the gardens; he died in 1697. His son, another Sir Richard, also M.P. for the county, was made Lord Cobham in 1714. He died at Stowe in 1749, and his sister succeeded to the estates. This was Hester, wife of Richard Grenville. She was made Countess Temple, and her son became the first Earl Temple. Her grandson George became Marquis of Buckingham,



The Long Bridge, Buckingham.

and his son, in 1822, became the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos.

No visitor to Stowe can dispense with these dull facts, although the Grenvilles have departed and many of the glories of their palace. Three little books lie before us. Two of these are descriptive guides to Stowe, the other is a catalogue of the contents of the house and gardens. The former are dated 1769 and 1838 respectively, the latter is dated 1848. The descriptive guide was made at a time when presumably

casual visitors were more welcome than at present. To-day the cycle and the motor-car might make them too numerous for the personal comfort of the occupier. These guides went through many editions, and the one dated 1769 is dedicated to Earl Temple. It is full of illustrations of all the temples and memorials described. The reprint of 1838 lacks the illustrations but is double the length, showing how Stowe had been added to in the interval. In both we are told of the Corinthian Arch or Gateway through which we see the fine frontage of the house, of the New Inn "where travellers are accommodated who come to see the place," of the two pavilions supported by doric pillars, of Congreve's monument designed by Kent.

We learn that the embellishments round the memorial to Congreve are intended to express the poet's dramatic genius. Upon the top sits a monkey viewing himself in a mirror, with the inscription in Latin :

Comedy is the imitation of life and the mirror of society.

The epitaph informs us that :—

To the sprightly, entertaining, elegant wit, and the polished, candid, easy manners of William Congreve, this memorial of his affectionate regret was erected by Cobham, 1736.

We see a white marble urn, erected by Hester Grenville, Countess of Chatham, to the memory of William, the great Earl of Chatham, her husband. The cascade is described, and the hermitage, and the temple of Venus with the motto from Catullus :—

" Let him love now, who never lov'd before ;

Let him who always lov'd, now love the more."

In the centre was a marble statue of Venus, which came from the Palace of the Cæsars at Rome. We are further introduced to a statue of Queen Caroline, the wife of George the Second. There also is a Temple of Bacchus, designed by Sir John Vanbrugh. In the flower garden is a group in stone, representing a piper and his dog, the work of Caius

Cibber, the father of Colley Cibber. This piper is described by Daniel Defoe in his *History of the Plague* as having been taken up for dead in the street, and thrown into the dead cart with other bodies to be buried; he awoke from his trance, just as those charged with the melancholy office were proceeding to throw him into the pit filled with the dead bodies of the victims of that dreadful calamity; after considerably alarming his bearers by sitting upright in the cart and playing his pipes, he was released from his perilous situation and lived for some years.

There was a Temple of Ancient Virtue, with statues of Lycurgus, Socrates, Homer, and Epaminondas; and a Temple of British Worthies, which included Milton, Shakspeare, Newton, Bacon, Raleigh, Hampden—and, as an anti-climax—Sir John Barnard, “who distinguished himself in Parliament by an active and firm opposition to the pernicious and iniquitous practice of stock-jobbing.” There was, and is, a stone altar erected by Louis the Eighteenth when he went to stay at Gosford as the guest of the Marquis of Buckingham, and transferred here when Gosford was sold. There is an obelisk in the park to General Wolfe. This is on a hill at the Northamptonshire side. There is a pillar to Lord Cobham, the maker of Stowe, and there is another memorial of Louis the Eighteenth in the form of a circular Bourbon Tower, which commemorates Louis’s visit here in 1808, when he was at Hartwell. But the treasures that were in the garden in 1832 would take a very long book to describe adequately. The fine building was not less splendid in its interior. There was a fine entrance hall, crowded with good pictures, including examples by Velasquez and Van Dyk; there was an Egyptian Hall, with sphinxes, and room after room full of other pictures, many of them now the glories of public and private collections all over the world; there was a library seventy-five feet long, and containing 20,000 volumes; a music room with a superb white marble chimney-piece. The State drawing-room was

covered with tapestry representing the Triumph of Ceres, Venus, Bacchus, Mars, and Diana. The Armoury and the Manuscript Room both call for mention. The treasures of the latter have been made accessible by the Historical Manuscripts Commission. So much for that "guide." In the substantial catalogue of 1848 we find most of the contents of the house and grounds have been sold, including the famous Chandos portrait of Shakspeare which was bought by the Earl of Ellesmere for £372 15s. The then Duke had spent too much money on increasing his estates, and had a mighty fall in consequence. The sale lasted forty days and realised £75,000. The pictures alone would probably fetch four times that amount to-day. Some of the treasures, however, were afterwards repurchased for Stowe and are now, we believe, in the possession of the present owner, who does not encourage visitors.

Before passing to Stowe as we find it to-day, it is interesting to see it through the eyes of that prince of gossips, Horace Walpole, who went everywhere and saw everything in his day. In 1753, writing to George Montagu from Strawberry Hill, he says :—

"I found the road to Stowe, above twelve miles, very bad, and it took me up two hours and a half; but the formidable idea I conceived of the breakfast and way of life there by no means answered. You was a prophet; it was very agreeable."

There is a curious glimpse of the place in 1764, when Walpole writes to Sir Horace Mann that Princess Amelia is at Stowe, "where Lady Temple, Sir Richard Lyttelton, and the Duchess of Bridgewater are all wheeled into the room in gouty chairs."

The Princess Amelia was the youngest child of George the Third, and died in 1810. She visited Stowe at least three times, and Lord Temple, who never lost an opportunity of commemorating something, or someone, built a Doric Arch inscribed "To her Royal Highness Princess Amelia Sophia, 1767;" with a medallion of the princess and a line from Horace—"O thou

worthy of ev'ry honour, and ever honoured!" Walpole met the princess at Stowe in July, 1770, when she saw and admired this arch. "Between the flattery and the prospect," he says, "the princess was really in Elysium: she visited her arch four or five times every day, and could not satiate herself with it." But what Horace thought of these commemorative monuments may be judged by a letter of his of 1765:—

"'Tis a dangerous thing to write political panegyrics or satires. It draws the unhappy bard into a thousand scrapes and contradictions. The edifices and inscriptions at Stowe should be a lesson not to erect monuments to the living. I will not place an ossuarium in my garden for my cat, before her bones are ready to be placed in it."

Walpole, indeed, never tired of making fun of Lord Temple's weakness for monuments. Writing of America, he expresses his wonder that Lord Temple "does not scramble over thither . . . but I recollect that he is unluckily on the wrong side, or we should have a new obelisk at Stowe, dedicated to some patriot of Boston." "If Stowe had but half so many buildings as it has, there would be too many," he says in another letter.

Walpole's best description of Stowe is one contained in a letter just after that visit of 1770:—

"Every acre brings to one's mind some instance of the parts or pedantry, of the taste or want of taste, of the ambition or love of fame, or greatness or miscarriages, of those that have inhabited, decorated, planned, or visited the place. Pope, Congreve, Vanbrugh, Kent, Gibbs, Lord Cobham, Lord Chesterfield, the mob of nephews, the Lytteltons, Grenvilles, Wests, Leonidas Gower and Wilkes, the late Prince of Wales, the King of Denmark, Princess Amelie, and the proud monuments of Lord Chatham's services, now enshrined there, then anathematised there, and now again commanding there, with the Temple of Friendship, like the Temple of Janus, sometimes open to war, and sometimes shut up in factious cabals—all these images crowd upon one's memory, and add visionary personages to the charming scenes, that are so enriched with fanes and temples, that the nice prospects are little less than visions themselves."

Our cynic goes on to describe an *al fresco* entertainment to which the people from Buckingham were permitted to crowd to see the Princess who "made no figure in going down fifty stone steps," while the host—Lord Temple—was bent double, and the Countess was very lame. "We supped in a grotto," he says, "which is as proper to this climate as a sea-coal fire would be in the dog-days at Tivoli."

In 1785 Stowe came to be further developed, and Walpole writes thereon to General Conway :—

"I have often and often studied the new plan of Stowe : it is pompous ; but though the wings are altered, they are not lengthened. Though three parts of the edifice in the garden are bad, they enrich that insipid county, and the vastness pleases me more than I can defend."¹

The Stowe of to-day is still a gorgeous place. The house still has a frontage of nearly a thousand feet. You may still see the Roman Triumph by Valdrè round the dome of the Marble Saloon, and the magnificent chimney-pieces in the drawing-room and dining-room, and the carving by Grinling Gibbons. There is a fine tapestry in the smaller dining-room. The gardens still possess innumerable temples, and all may note the Corinthian Arch known to generations of visitors. These gardens, let us ever remember, were apostrophised by Pope and Thomson in their day, and are scarcely less inspiring in ours. It is thus that Pope alludes to them in his *Moral Essays* :—

"Still follow sense, of every part the soul ;
Parts, answering parts, shall slide into a whole ;
Spontaneous beauties all around advance ;
Start even from difficulty, strike from chance ;
Nature shall join you, time shall make it grow,
A work to wonder at—perhaps a Stowe."

But James Thomson in *The Seasons* gives an impression of

¹ *Letters of Horace Walpole*. Edited by Mrs. Paget Toynbee. Vols III, V, VI, VII, and XIII.

Stowe that is perhaps better known, and in any case may fitly conclude this chapter :—

“ Oh, lead me to the wide-extended walks,
The fair majestic paradise of Stowe !
Not Persian Cyrus on Ionia's shore
E'er saw such sylvan scenes ; such various art
By genius fir'd, such ardent genius tam'd
By cool judicious art—that, in the strife,
All beauteous Nature fears to be outdone.”

CHAPTER XXIV

BUCKINGHAM TO LILLINGSTONE DAYRELL AND MAIDS MORETON

WE have seen that Horace Walpole refers to "that insipid county" in his account of Stowe, and it may be admitted that the many admirable beauties which characterise Buckinghamshire in its southern and central portions are not as much in evidence in the north, and that on our journey to Olney and many other towns and villages the eye is not attracted quite as it is in the Chiltern Hills and in the neighbourhood of the Thames. But North Buckinghamshire for the traveller in search of the picturesque has much to offer us—much, moreover, that has found immortal portraiture in the poetry of Cowper. In any case the enthusiast for human life that has been crowned with worthy success has many interesting examples in this journey. We advise, indeed, two more days in Buckingham before visiting Olney, and, to-day we will skirt the whole area of Stowe Park and see Water Stratford, Lillingstone Dayrell, Leckhampstead, and Maids Moreton. We first visit Gawcott, only a mile and a half from Buckingham. This village was the birthplace of Sir Gilbert Scott, whose father was curate here when Scott was born. There is a memorial to Thomas Scott, Gilbert's father, in the church. Gilbert Scott's grandfather was that famous Thomas Scott, the Commentator, whose grave we have

seen at Aston Sandford. Gilbert Scott's father was born at Weston Underwood, so that three generations of his family had association with Buckinghamshire. Yet Sir Gilbert Scott is graceless enough to say in his *Personal and Professional Recollections* that though his father, like himself, was born in Buckinghamshire, he hardly felt that he had in reality "any very direct connection with that county, clergymen being so much birds of passage, that the place of their children's birth seems little more than a matter of chance." But Gilbert Scott's association with the county was quite exceptionally intimate. Apart from his grandfather's noted connection with Weston Underwood, Olney and Aston Sandford, where he died, and his father's birth at Weston Underwood and possession of the perpetual curacy of Gawcott, he had an uncle, Samuel King, who was curate of Hartwell when Louis the Eighteenth was residing there. This uncle went to live in a more beautiful part of our county, that is at Latimers, and Gilbert Scott, as a boy, frequently went to stay at his rectory. We have an admirable description of Gawcott from Scott as it was when he was a boy. The great architect was born in 1811, and the village in his early days seems to have had eccentric features that we fail to find now. When his father first went to Gawcott he found the road rendered impassable by a large hole dug across it, while the inhabitants were engaged in baiting a badger. The farmers, dressed in "the John Bull style," had corduroy knee-breeches, shoes with large buckles, and usually carried a gun and were accompanied by a sporting dog. It was a great day for the boy when once a year he was taken to see his grandfather at Aston Sandford, twenty-five miles away. This grandfather, as Scott remembered him, was "a thin, tottering old man, very grave and dignified." When he went to church he wore a wig and he wore knee-breeches, with silver buckles, and black silk stockings. Family prayers at Aston Rectory usually lasted an hour. Another annual pilgrimage of young Scott was to Stowe, where the great Duke of Buckingham then reigned.

The party went the four miles, some in a baker's cart, some walking, and the father on his old horse "Jack." They lunched in the Temple of Concord. Stowe introduced the boy to classic architecture, and the neighbouring churches to Gothic. The church of Hillesden was only two miles from Gawcott—we saw it when we visited the three Claydons—and, as a boy, he also knew well Tingewick Church, Chetwode Church, and Maids Moreton Church, all of which we have still to visit. Some of these churches he had afterwards the satisfaction of restoring.

From Gawcott we ride to Preston Bisset, where the thatched cottages will alone repay us. The Bisset family lived here for generations in Anglo-Norman times. The church has two bells, but in 1637 it was recorded as having three. Tradition has it that in former times, when there was no resident rector, the bells were not rung for a year, and so a neighbouring parish took away one of them. Note that the inn near the church is called "The Old Hat." From Preston Bisset let us go to Chetwode, that is to say to Chetwode Church, for although it obtains its name from *Chit*, a cottage, and the woods adjoining, both wood and cottages are now to seek. We are only separated here by a stream from the County of Oxford. The family of Chetwode, which once owned the Manor, are said to have gained the grant of an annual Fair here in reward for slaying a terrible wild boar in Chetwode Woods. As a matter of fact, Boar's Head Field is still to be seen within a mile from Chetwode Manor-house. Here in 1810, a mound being dug up, the skeleton of a huge boar was discovered. More precious is the old ballad that relates that

"Sir Ryal as he drewed his broadsword with might,
Wind well thy horn, good hunter !
And he fairly cut off the boar's head quite,
For he was a jovial hunter !"

The tradition has bearing upon it the custom of Rhyne-toll, which prevailed here until the advent of the railway. The

Rhyne commenced at nine o'clock on the morning of the 30th of October and concluded at midnight on the 7th of November. A horn was blown in the church hall at Buckingham to commence the proceedings, then all the boys of the district assembled and were given ginger-bread and beer. A procession of these boys proceeded from Buckingham to Tingewick, to the Oxfordshire border of the county, and to the Red Lion Inn, near Finmere, when the horn was again sounded; a further distribution of provisions took place, then the Rhyne-toll began. Toll-collectors were stationed in various villages within this radius and were empowered to levy a tax of 2s. a score upon all cattle or swine driven through the townships. The time came when the farmers compounded for this toll by payment of 1s. each, and the quaint custom is now swept into the limbo of forgotten things. The advent of the railway made it unworkable, and the family of Chetwode long since accepted a lump sum, or, as the present vicar happily says, "the promise of it," to forgo their rights. An inscription in the church is to one Risley Risley, who died in 1755, and was "a gentleman of great hospitality." Let us not miss the fine stained glass of great antiquity with its curious figures that we find in Chetwode church. There are some interesting illustrations of this glass, printed in colours, in Lysons's *Buckinghamshire*. Sir Gilbert Scott tells how in boyhood he was entranced by his first sight of these windows. There was once an Augustinian Priory here, founded by Sir Ralphe de Norwich in 1244, and suppressed in 1460.

We must go northward through Barton Hartshorn to reach Tingewick, otherwise the former place, with its insignificant church, would not be worth a visit. We pass Boar's Head Field on our way to Tingewick. Tingewick church is on a hill to the north-east of the long village. Its tower is attributed to William of Wykeham. The gem of the church is the elaborate brass to Erasmus Williams, who died in 1608, aged 56. He was rector here, and is attired

in a gown. He is kneeling. His hands are clasped. On either side of him is a pillar on which hang astronomical, musical, and geometrical instruments, painting materials, and books. On the top of one pillar is a globe, on the other an owl. The most elaborate of all the illustrations to Lipscomb's fine county history is the reproduction of this brass, which makes Tingewick worth a visit to-day. The epitaph runs as follows :—

“ This dooth Erasmus Williams represent,
Whome living all did love, deade all lament
His humane Artes behinde his backe attende,
Whereon spare howers he wisely chose to spende,
And from Corinthiane Columne deckt with Artes,
Now to the Temples Pillar him converts,
Under the Rainebows arche of Promise, where
Of hoped blisse noe deluge he neede feare.
He of this Church did a firme Pillar live,
T’ whome deade his Wives love dooth these Pillars give,
Contrived by his Schollar and his friende,
Whoe wisht their loves and lives had made one ende.
Erasmus Mores encomion set forth,
Wee want a More to praise Erasmus worth.”

From Tingewick we go northwards to Water Stratford, where we are again quite on the borders of Oxfordshire. There is a fine Norman doorway to the church, with a figure, probably of the Saviour, above it, supporting two angels. This doorway and those of Dinton and Stewkley are three of the architectural treasures of our county. Water Stratford was once the scene of great religious excitement. Its rector between 1674 and 1694 was one John Mason. Towards the close of his career he became a fanatic who believed that he was Elias, and he persuaded thousands of people in the neighbouring country to believe this also. They called Water Stratford “Mount Zion,” and great numbers of his disciples sold their property, left their homes and went to live in barns and tents until the day of judgment, which they imagined was only a few months hence. The service included dancing, clapping of hands, and

wild shrieking, with singing to the violin, tabor and pipe. Some shouted while they danced "*Appear, Appear, Appear.*" Mason foretold his own resurrection after three days, and his successor as rector, Isaac Rushworth, actually had his predecessor's grave opened and the body exposed to the public view in the hope of convincing the deluded people that their "Elias" had not prophesied accurately. Notwithstanding this there were followers of Mason assembled here for long years afterwards.

From Water Stratford we may go on to Shalstone, where we are exactly four miles from Buckingham. It is a pretty village, but without any very noteworthy history. Its church also has many memorials, some to the FitzJameses who lived at Shalstone House for long years. There is a brass effigy from an older church to Dame Susan Kyngestone, who died in 1511. The Purefoy and Purefoy Jervoise families reigned here as Lords of the Manor from 1312 to 1794. There are many of the names recorded in the Register as it was printed by Browne Willis in 1755. He says of this Register that it is "very ancient and one of the most remarkable I have seen." Our next village is Westbury, where we are on the banks of the river Ouse, which flows in front of Westbury Manor-house. Lipscomb gives a long list of the vicars of Westbury, beginning with the year 1225, yet even Lipscomb can find nothing to say about the church, in spite of its saddleback tower and interesting appearance. But every English village has its history for those who seek it, and Westbury Manor-house of that period was plundered by the Parliamentary army in 1643.

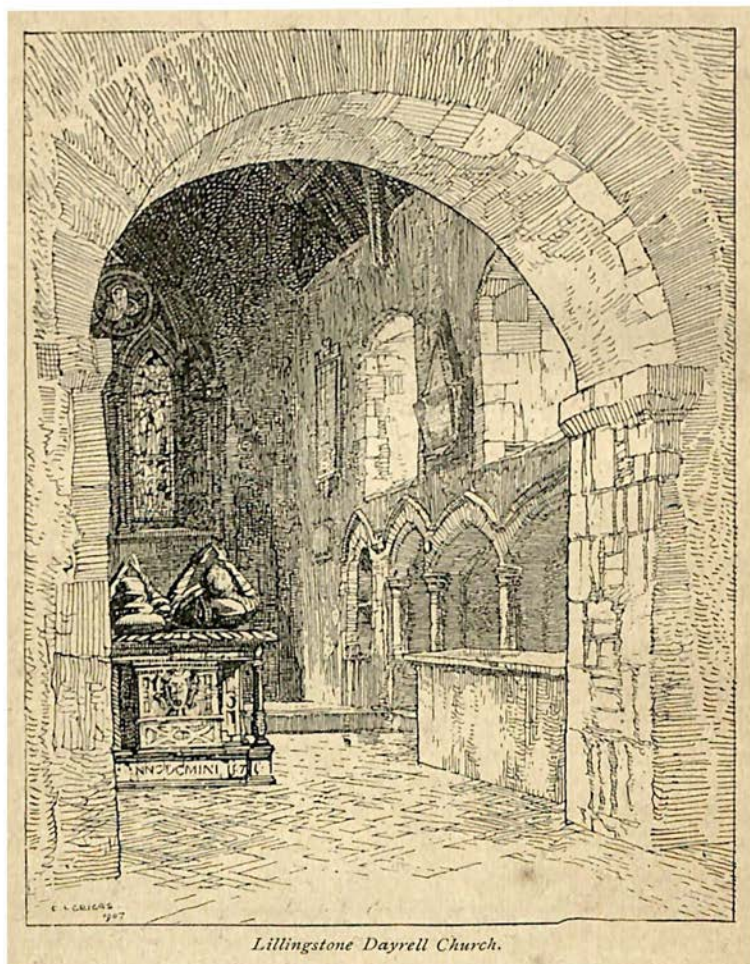
From Westbury we may skirt the border of the county that joins Northamptonshire, visiting Turweston, which is a picturesque village with a church that is worth a visit. We then follow the Ouse to Biddlesden. There is a more direct road to Biddlesden. By this direct route we pass by Biddlesden Park, owned by the Baroness Kinloss, daughter of the last Duke of Buckingham. The house stands on the

site of an abbey which was suppressed in 1540. It was founded by Ernald de Bosco in 1147—another reminder of the Norman Ecclesiastical Conquest of this county, but not a trace remains to-day. It was otherwise when our first guide to the district was written, as the following quotation from Browne Willis's book indicates:—

“The ruins of the Church and Abbey House were left in good part standing when I visited it in 1712, and there were to be seen two walls of the east side of the cloyster, and a part of the tower, together with a room of about forty feet square, supported by four pillars. In the chapel lay the broken effigie which was on the tomb of one of the Lord Zouch's: it was of alabaster, and in armour. But beside the Lord Zouch, there were, as I have seen, several persons of note buried here, particularly the founder's family, the Boscos, and divers others, as of the family of the Billings and the Lovetts, as appears by the inscriptions which I have met with, which were affixed to their grave-stones and brass plates.”

When the estate came in course of time to the Peckhams of Denham, whose tombs we have seen there, they caused the Abbey church to be demolished and conveyed the five bells to Denham, where they were recast into eight. There was a tomb in the parish church to Francis Dayrell, of Lillingstone, who gave his name to the next village. John Sayer, who built the Manor-house, was murdered in 1713 by an attorney named Noble. From Biddleston we travel to Lillingstone Dayrell, either by many cross-lanes, or, if we are in a motor-car and time is no object, by taking the high-road to Towcester, passing Hazelborough Wood, turning to the left at Silverstone, and from Whittlebury running south to Lillingstone Dayrell. It is scarcely possible to visit this part of our county without running into Northampton. Lillingstone Dayrell, at any rate, is well worth a visit if only to see the tombs of the Dayrell family in the church. There is a tablet on the tower, outside the church, to the Reverend Richard Darryl, “in whose family the presentation has continued for 550 years.” He died in 1767. The first tomb in the chancel to Paul Dayrell and Dorothy, his wife, is dated 1571. There is a brass by the

side to Paul and Margaret Darryl, dated 1491. The thirty-first male heir of the family died in 1800, the thirty-fourth in



Lillingstone Dayrell Church.

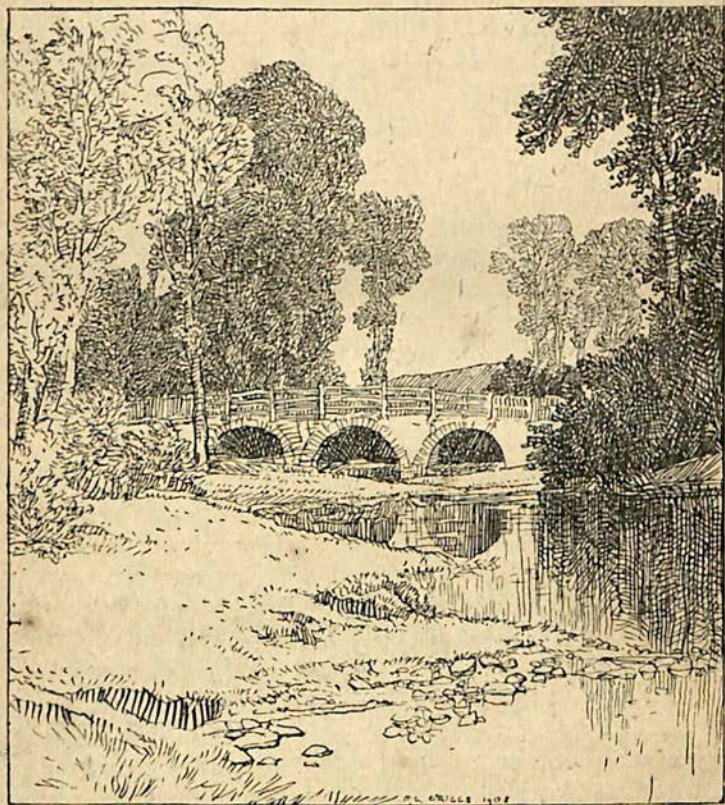
1863. The pedigree of the Dayrells fills two pages of Lipscomb's book, commencing with Elias in 1195, to Richard,

who was buried here in 1841. Peter Dayrell was with the King at Oxford in 1634, and lived to see the restoration, dying in 1667. Margaret Dayrell is a fine study in fifteenth century costume with her splendid head-dress and ermine robe. On the tomb to Paul and Dorothy are recumbent statues of Paul in plate armour, his feet resting on a lion; Dorothy in a richly laced dress, with a goat's head at her feet. We see ten children cut in marble in relief on the side. The register records that the font was broken by the soldiers of the Parliamentary Army in 1644. At Lillingstone Dayrell we are again on the Buckingham road, four and a half miles from that town, but we may go a little out of our way to visit Lillingstone Lovell, and Leckhampstead, instead of going due south to Buckingham through Maids Moreton. Part of Luffield Priory, a Benedictine monastery, founded in Henry the First's reign, stood in the parish of Lillingstone Dayrell. Lillingstone Lovell, until 1884, was in Oxfordshire. There are brasses in the church and effigies to Thomas Clarell and his wife Agnes. The church is otherwise interesting, being one of the three churches of Buckinghamshire which has a saddleback roof. Leckhampstead is still more attractive. It stands by a stream which turns a mill. It has Norman doorways, and a font of the rare tub-formation, and there is much of an old-world appearance. It has not been "churchwardenized."

We now travel in a south-westerly direction to Maids Moreton, passing Foscott, or Foxcott, on our way. Here the remains of a Roman villa were discovered in 1840, with a tessellated pavement, that was removed to Stowe. The church is very small and very old, and has a Norman doorway. At Maids Moreton we may see a fresco in the church, which was restored as late as 1887. This fresco represents the Lord's Supper. A tablet records that—

"In pious memory of two maids, daughters of Thomas Peover of this benefice, these figures are placed in the ancient matrix by Mrs. H. Andrewes, Lady of the Manor in 1890. Tradition tells that they built this church, and died about 1480."

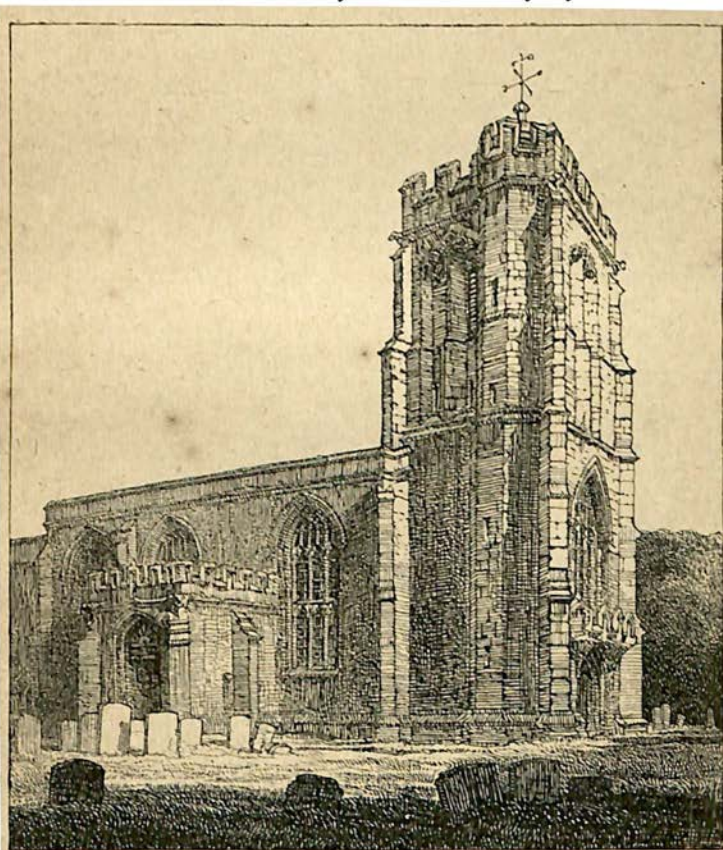
Maids Moreton was the birthplace of Dr. George Bate, who had the honour of being physician to both Oliver Cromwell and Charles the Second. His title to favour with the latter



Leckhampstead Bridge.

was a report spread by his friends, that he had given Cromwell a dose of medicine that hastened his end. In an old oak door are holes said to have been made by the soldiers of Cromwell. Browne Willis records the discovery of

a large stone coffin in which were the bodies of the two "reputed founders of this church." The registers contain evidence of the individuality and of the loyalty of the vicar

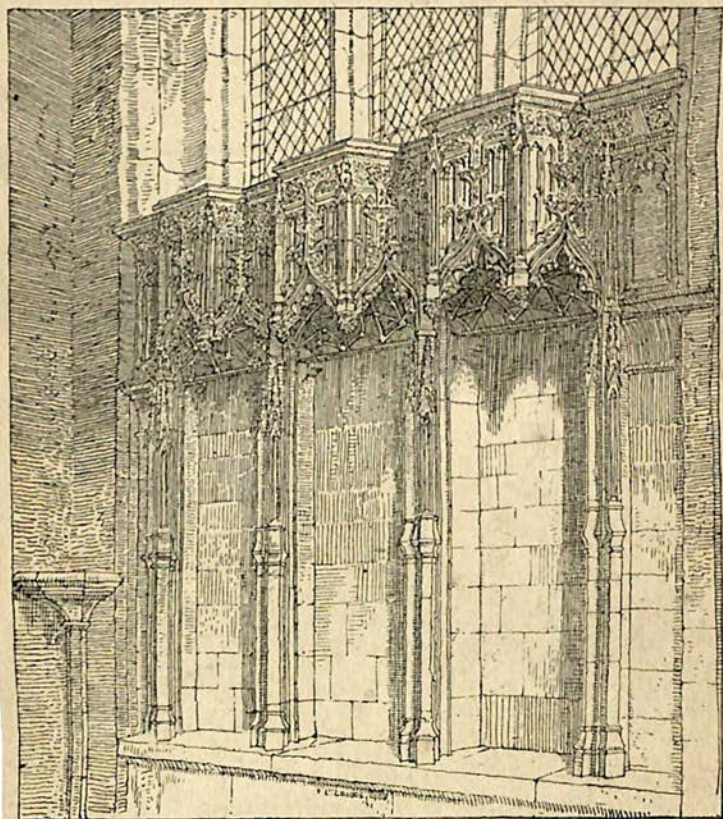


Maids Moreton Church.

who suffered from the Parliamentary Army. An entry by him of 1642 runs thus :—

"This year the worst of Parliaments, wickedly rebelling against the best of princes, King Charles I., the Kingdome suffered a long while under

most sad afflictions, especially churches, whilst they pretended reformation, were everywhere robbed and ruined by the rebels. In this Church of Moreton, the windows were broken ; a costly desk in the form of a spread



Sedilia at Maids Moreton.

eagle, on which we used to lay Bishop Jewell's works, doomed to perish as an abominable idoll ; the Crown (which with its fall had like to have broke out the brains of him who did it) cut off the steeple by ye souldiers att the command of one called Colonell Purefoy. We conveyed away what we could, and among other things the Register was hid, and for that

cause is not absolutely perfect for divers yeares tho' I have used my best diligence to record as many particulars as I could come by."

Sir Gilbert Scott declared the tower to be "of admirable and unique design," and there is an especially fine stained-glass window in honour of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee to connect us with the present. There is a monument in the nave to Mrs. Penelope Verney, first wife of Lord Willoughby de Brooke, who died, aged eighteen years, in 1718. It has upon it the inscription:—

" Under this stone doth lye
As much virtue as could die,
Which, when alive, did vigour give
To as much beauty as could live."

This epitaph is quoted in all histories of Buckinghamshire, although, apparently, not one of them, from "Lipscomb" to those of our own day, is aware of its origin, and indeed one of the more modern guide-books describes the lines as "doggerel verse." The "doggerel verse" is one of the most admired poems in the English language. It is in every treasury of poetry extant, but in a slightly altered form. Ben Jonson actually wrote in his *Epitaph on Elizabeth L.H.*:—

" Underneath this stone doth lie
As much beauty as could die ;
Which in life did harbour give
To more virtue than doth live "—

which, it must be admitted, is the better poem. For the incorrect version Addison is responsible. In No. 33 of the *Spectator* he quotes, with great enthusiasm, Jonson's lines. He quotes them in the exact form which Lord Willoughby de Brooke copied when he wanted an epitaph upon his wife. Here we may leave Maids Moreton. Another mile and we are again back in Buckingham.

CHAPTER XXV

BUCKINGHAM TO NEWPORT PAGNELL

THERE is a good high-road from Buckingham to Newport Pagnell through Stony Stratford and Wolverton. It is not a pretty or a picturesque journey, although Newport Pagnell is well worth a visit. To reach Stony Stratford we cross a corner of Northamptonshire once again. Stony Stratford, which is six miles from Buckingham, is mentioned in *Shakspeare*, when the Archbishop of York says :—

Last night, I heard they lay at Stony Stratford ;
And at Northampton do they rest to-night
To-morrow or next day they will be here.

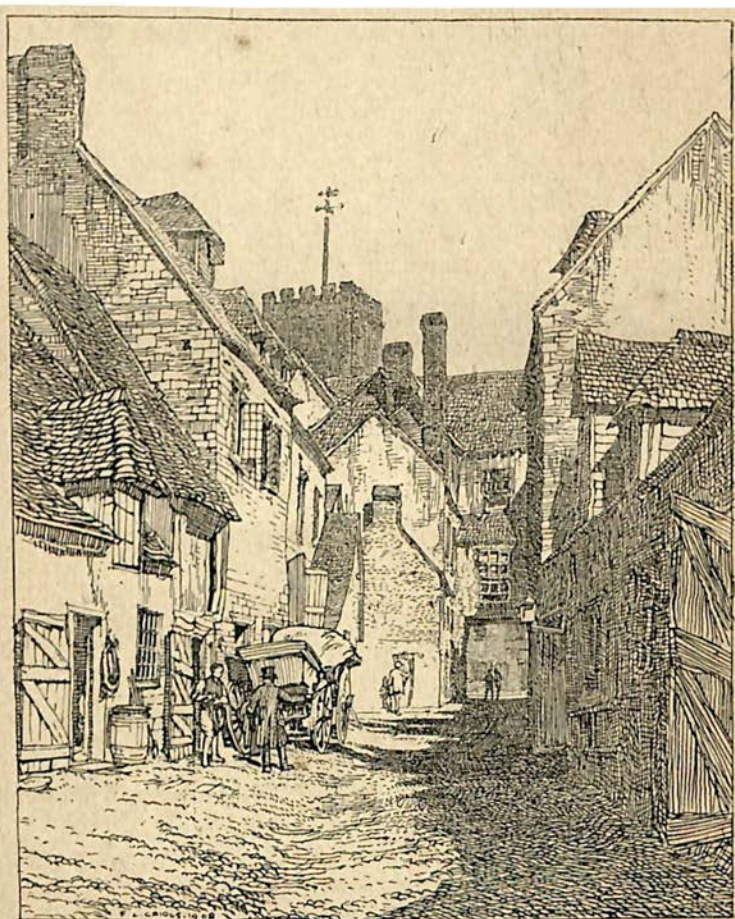
The lines are in *Richard the Third*, for it was at an inn in this town that the hunchback Duke of Gloucester arrested his nephew Edward the Fifth, who with his brother was murdered by him in the Tower. Many of the infant king's partisans were also arrested here in 1483, among them Sir Richard Woodville, Lord Rivers, the father of the Queen, who was executed at Pontefract on June 25th of that year. Stony Stratford, indeed, is associated with the romance and the tragedy of the Woodvilles. Here, or near here, at Grafton Regis, Edward the Fourth is supposed to have first met Elizabeth Woodville, the daughter of Lord Rivers, whom he made his Queen. A "Queen's Oak," is still pointed out as the spot where the beautiful widow—she was a Lady Grey—came to pray for the restoration of her

husband's lands, he having been a Lancastrian. The secret marriage took place in May, 1464, either at Grafton Regis, her home, or at Stony Stratford. Here, after Edward the Fourth's death, Elizabeth's father and son were captured and carried to their doom. An earlier incident in English History is associated with Stony Stratford. It will be remembered that when Queen Eleanor of Castile died at Harby in Nottinghamshire, in 1290, her grief-stricken husband, King Edward the First, carried her bier through England to Westminster Abbey, and wherever it rested crosses were erected, eleven in all, and one of these was at Stony Stratford. The town also played its part in the Civil War of Charles the First's reign. Stratford was nearly burned down in 1742. It would seem that a careless servant at the "Bull" Inn

"in getting up the linen after a wash, and drying it before the fire discovered a sheet burning, and hearing her mistress's voice, a passionate woman, of when she stood in fear, to avoid her anger, thrust it up the chimney, which set fire to the premises, and, afterwards, the wind being high, and several of the houses thatched, burnt down nearly all the farms on both sides of the town."

The sentence is a long one, but it is from a contemporary newspaper of Northampton. Writing of the "Bull" Inn recalls the fact that it was a later "Bull" Inn at which the London coaches were wont to change horses, while the passengers by the Birmingham coach changed at the "Cock." It is said that from the jests that prevailed between the passengers of the two coaches came the familiar phrase "a cock and bull story." In any case the town still has a "Cock" and a "Bull" among its hostelries. In the eighteenth century Stony Stratford had two churches, St. Mary Magdalen and St. Giles's, but the former was destroyed by the fire of 1742—all but the tower which we see—and was not rebuilt. The church is not interesting. It has an old tower but the rest is eighteenth century work. The claims of certain houses to having sheltered the little King Edward the Fifth are purely mythical.

From Stony Stratford we drive through Wolverton, which, seen from the high-road, is an ugly centre of the railway



The "Bull" Yard, Stony Stratford.

industry, many workshops of the London and North Western Railway being here, and some five thousand men being em-

ployed. Those who have an eye to social development will find compensation in the well-organised reading-rooms and schools, as well as in the Science and Art Institute provided by the great railway company and erected in 1861. A tramway line runs from Stony Stratford to Wolverton. The modern church contains a seventeenth century monument to Sir Thomas Longueville—a life-size effigy. This is in Old Wolverton, for there are two Wolvertons, although they are practically one. Lipscomb is enthusiastic over the “costliness” of this church, which was erected in 1815. From Wolverton we may visit Castlethorpe and Hanslope—a four mile run on motor or cycle, leaving Haversham on our right for a return journey which shall take us by a circular tour to Newport Pagnell. There is a grey stone church at Castlethorpe with a monument in the chancel to Thomas Tyrrell, who died in 1671, and to Bridget, his wife. The castle that once stood here was, it is said, fortified against King John in 1215—one of the earliest active efforts of the county for constitutional liberties. But the castle seems to have been demolished in King John’s reign in any case. It was owned by William Mauduit, Chamberlain to the King in the reign of Henry the Second, to whom leave was given “to embattle his house at Hanslope and to make a park,” also “to stock it with deer out of Salsey Forest”; Mauduit took part with the confederated barons against King John. This Mauduit became Earl of Warwick.

The church at Hanslope has a Norman door and Norman arches. The tombs to the families of Watts and Jenkinson are not important. But an inscription “composed in duty by their loving Son, Richard Troughton,” deserves to be recorded :—

Within the centre of this marble stone
The Bodys of my dearest Parents lye ;
They were Death’s right : he claimed them as his own :
Their souls to Heav’n, their Fames are mounted high :
He Troughton’s Hight, and Hampden she by birth,
Whom Heaven stole hence : to good to live on earth ;

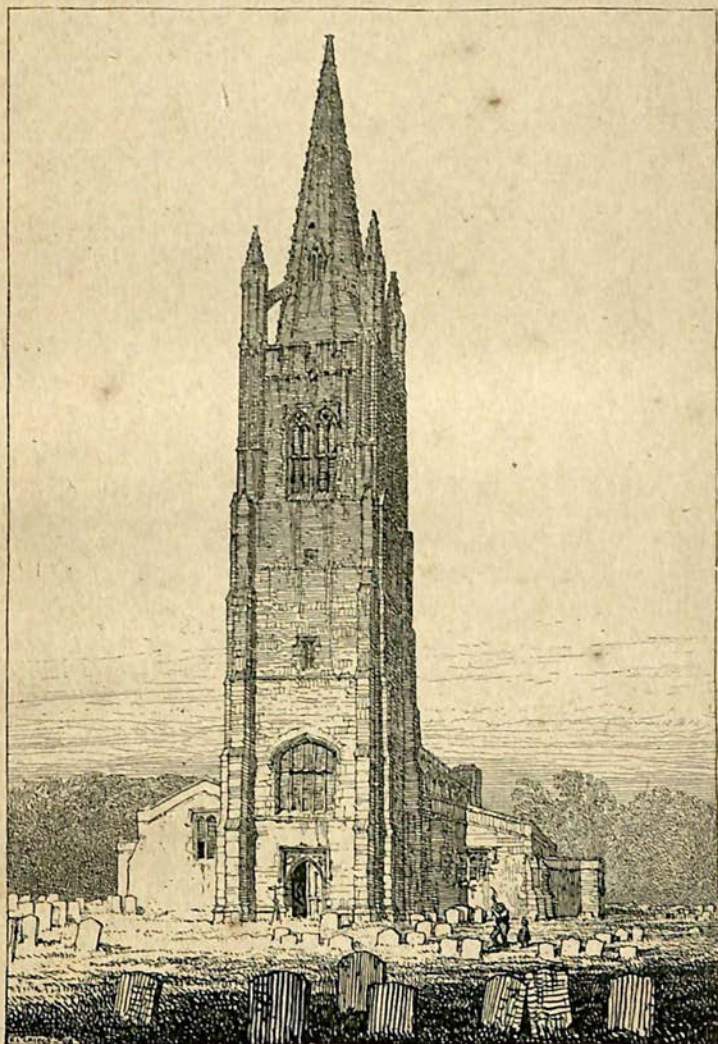
Yet thus they left, to their immortal praise,
They lived well, died well, full of happy days.

There is a tomb in the churchyard to Joseph Cox, who died in 1759, aged 92, and to Elizabeth, his wife, who died in 1762, aged 101. At the time of Elizabeth Cox's death she had 174 descendants living. There is also a tomb to Alexander M'Kay, of Glasgow, a famous prize-fighter in his day, who died in 1830, aged 26, and has the following epitaph :—

Strong, athletic is my frame ;
Far from my native home I came,
And manly fought with Simon Byrne ;
Alas ! but liv'd not to return.

Reader, take warning from my fate,
Lest you should rue your case too late ;
If you have ever fought before,
Determine now to fight no more.

From Hanslope we continue our journey by pleasant byways to Haversham, a straggling village midway between Newport Pagnell and Stony Stratford. The church, which has much Norman work, contains an alabaster altar-tomb beneath a Gothic arch with a recumbent effigy of Elizabeth, Lady Russell, who died in 1422, aged 80. There are six figures sculptured on the front of the tomb, four of them of angels, the other two being probably Lady Russell's sons. She was Elizabeth de la Plaunche and was four times married : firstly to Lord Grey of Rutherford, who died in 1389 ; secondly to Sir John Clinton, who died in 1397 ; thirdly to Sir John de Birmingham ; and finally to Sir John Russell. The good woman seemed devoted to the name of John. Not one of her husbands appears to have been a Buckinghamshire man, so that it must have been devotion to the home of her childhood that led to her elaborate preparations for burial in this quiet church above this obscure village. Why she retained the name of her second husband is not recorded. There are two other old tombs in the church—one a brass to John Maunsell, dated

*Hanslope Church.*

1605, ornamented with a skeleton. Maunsell's age is given as "66 years, 4 months and 5 days." George Lipscomb gives high praise to Edward Cooke, rector of Haversham from 1802 to 1824. He was, he tell us :—

An assiduous collector of books, possessor of a very extensive library; particularly in the departments of theology, law history, antiquities and classical literature; and including that numerous collection of books and



manuscripts relative to the history of his native County, of which, by his generous beneficence the writer has so largely availed himself in the compilation of this work.

A mile from Haversham is Stantonbury, with a disused church, the village having only a few houses, and a new church having been founded at New Bradwell in 1858. New Bradwell is in the heart of the Wolverton railway-works. Bradwell itself is a mile further south. When

we cross the railway we come to Bradwell Abbey, now a farm-house. Here a small chapel alone serves to remind us of the Priory for Black Monks, founded about 1155 and dissolved in 1526. The little chapel has been used as a stable, a carpenter's workshop, and turned to other ignoble uses in these modern days. While we are at Old Bradwell we are tempted to visit Loughton and Shenley. At Loughton we are four miles from Fenny Stratford, which we have already visited, and four miles from Newport Pagnell. There were formerly two parishes, Great and Little Loughton, but Little Loughton church was pulled down more than four centuries ago. Near the Manor House, which stands somewhere in the vicinity of the extinct church, human bones have been dug up in recent times. The present church stands on high ground on the east side of the village. There are tablets to members of the Crane family. It is our belief that there is no village in England, and not one even in the whole world, that has not its human and indeed its tragic interest for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear ; but we have been unable to discover any at Loughton. Yet stay ! many will see a very tragic interest in this digging up of a long disused graveyard by the plough and the unearthing of bones as upon a long forgotten battlefield. Many, again, may find romance in the inscriptions on the church bells. There are, for example, two bells at Loughton founded by one Henry Jordan, who was a monk at the monastery at Hurley-on-Thames. One likes to think of the sturdy monk, who died about 1470, working upon his bells to serve this little village for weddings and funerals for so long through the centuries. A third bell was made by Bartholomew Atton in 1590, and a fourth by Robert Atton in 1631. At Shenley Church End we are a little nearer Fenny Stratford, and at Shenley Brook End still nearer. The two villages are a mile apart. The latter has picturesque cottages, and, of course, a brook. The old almshouses here are dated 1615. These lands in the two Shenleys were once—in the time

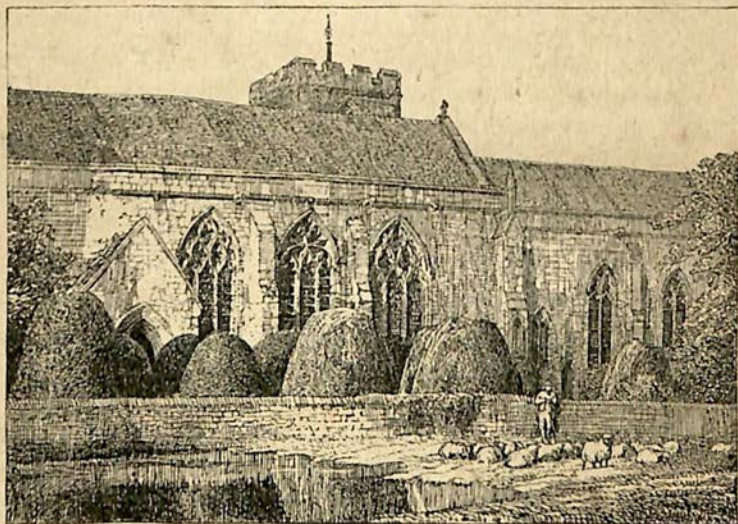
of William Rufus—the property of a monastery in Normandy. The church is interesting. It is in the form of a cross with the tower in the middle. The principal monument is the recumbent effigy in white marble of Thomas Stafford, who died in 1607, aged 80. To him Shenley owes its almshouses. From Shenley Brook End we cross Watling Street—it is believed that the Romans had a station at Shenley—and a direct road takes us to Simpson, another little village with a church bordering on the meadows. Among the mural monuments to the family of Hanmer is one by Bacon, with medallion portrait of Sir Walter Hanmer, who died in 1783. At Simpson we are five miles from Newport Pagnell, from which town, however, many villages separate us, some on the high road—Woughton-on-the-Green, Great Woolstone, Little Woolstone, and Willen; some on the cross-roads, as Walton, Wavendon, and Milton Keynes to our right, and Great Linford to our left; and one village, Broughton, on the high road, between Woburn, in Bedfordshire, and Newport Pagnell—a road which runs parallel with the road that we are on when at Simpson. Not everyone will be able to spare the time to visit these nine villages. We go a little off the main road at Simpson to reach Walton, near which is Walton Hall. There are interesting monuments in the pretty little church, standing in the meadows among trees. In the chancel is a brass plate to a child of eleven, who died in 1617, Elizabeth Pyxe by name. A portion of the inscription is in Latin, and it continues in English:—

Elizabeth the daughter deare
Of William Pyxe heere lies interr'd.
O! that her death for many a yeare
Almightie God would have deferred.
Her Mother's hope, her Father's joye,
And eke her Friend's delight was shee :
She was most kind, courteous, not coy,
A meeker soule there could not bee.
A modest hue, a lovely grace
Appeared in her beauteous face.

But nowe, alas ; her life beholde,
In tender Budde is falne awaye ;
Her comely Corps senseless and colde,
Intombd is in carthlie Claye.
Her soul with Christ which did her save,
Enjoyes no doubt celestial Joyes ;
Satan no Power o'er her can have ;
She is preserv'd from Hell's annoyes.
Dear Besse, adieu, adieu I say,
Until we meet in Heaven for aye.

Near by is a mural monument with two marble busts. These are Bartholomew Beale and "Katharine his only wife." There is a medallion by Nollekens to Sir Thomas Pinfold, who died in 1701. This is attached to a record of his achievements. At Wavendon we are almost on the borders of Bedfordshire—Woburn, the seat of the Bedford family, being just over the border, and Woburn Sands Station, a mile from Wavendon, actually in our county. There were famous pits for fuller's earth here until a generation or two back. They were being worked in Henry the Eighth's reign. Wavendon church has been too thoroughly restored to be interesting. It has fine stained-glass windows, and a pulpit that came from an old London church. From Wavendon we may either go on to Broughton, making a slight diversion to reach Milton Keynes, or we may retrace our steps to Walton, and thence to Woughton-on-the-Green, where there is naturally a very noticeable "green." In the church is a recumbent figure in freestone of a man with a dog at his feet, supposed to be one Monxton, who built the church in the reign of Edward the First. The bridge over the river between Woughton and Walton was once called Monxton's Bridge. We must visit Great Woolstone and Little Woolstone, neither of which village has a hundred inhabitants. Weedon Butler, who contributed to Nicholls's *Literary Anecdotes*, was rector of Great Woolstone from 1806 to 1831. Otherwise the Woolstones have no articulate story.

Milton Keynes, a little to the east, is more interesting, for it was the birthplace of Bishop Atterbury. Milton Keynes wrongly suggests the name of the poet who is associated with Buckinghamshire, through Horton and Chalfont. It actually derives from the ancient family of Keynes, who once owned the manor, and it was formerly called Middleton Keynes. The manor in Henry the Seventh's day was granted to Sir Edward



Milton Keynes Church.

Poynings, famous or infamous in connection with Poynings' Law, by which, when Lord Deputy of Ireland, he fastened upon that unhappy country many additional burdens and ignominies. The English career of Poynings, however, rather belongs to Kent than to Buckinghamshire. He died at Westenhanger, in the former county, in 1521. Lewis Atterbury was rector here from 1657. to 1693. He was the author of *Babylon's Downfall*, a sermon against Roman Catholicism. His son Francis was born here in 1662, and spent his early years here under his father's tuition. He was at Westminster School

under Dr. Busby. His career as Bishop of Rochester and Dean of Westminster, two offices that he held simultaneously, is well known. From the date of the accession of George the First this eloquent preacher—Steele yaxes enthusiastic over his oratory in *The Tatler*—became unsympathetic to the Guelph Dynasty, and he was charged with an attempt to restore the Stuarts. He was tried by his peers and condemned to exile. He left England in 1723, never to return alive. But his remains were brought back to England upon his death in 1731, and he was buried in Westminster Abbey. His brother Lewis was also associated with Buckinghamshire. He was born at Caldecott, in the parish of Newport Pagnell, and seems to have been more loyal to the place of his birth than his more famous brother. He left some books to the library of Newport Pagnell, and also ten pounds a year for the support of a schoolmistress for girls in that town. Of the father of Lewis and Francis Atterbury we learn that he was drowned by passing over the bridge of Newport Pagnell during a great flood. He is buried under the altar of the church, where there is a brief inscription. We are struck in Milton Keynes by the curiously-shaped yew-trees. Broughton, our next village, is three miles from Newport. Its church has much to interest us, mural paintings or frescoes, brasses of the Broughton family, and, above all, two old desks to which are fastened by chains, in old-world fashion, books that have been in the church since 1666, probably with intervals. The fact that Lipscomb does not mention them seems to indicate that they were not there in 1840. One is entitled *A Defence of the Apologie of the Church of England, Anno 1567*; the other Erasmus's *Commentary*. The slab to John de Broughton is dated 1403. Agnes, his wife, died in 1399. The frescoes discovered in 1849, and probably of the fourteenth century, represent "Christ after the Crucifixion" and "The Last Judgment." On the south wall there is a figure that is supposed to be St. Dunstan. St. George and the Dragon are over the south door.

From Broughton let us go on towards Newport Pagnell, but turn to the right for Moulsoe, whence, however, the most marked impression that we carry away from a very noticeable church is the wrecked tomb of a knight and his dame. Lipscomb suggests that the tomb is that of one Routhell, who possessed land here in the reign of Henry the Eighth, but all inscription is gone. Gone also are the figures that we know were formerly here of the four sons and six daughters of this unknown pair. From Moulsoe, if we do not desire to go into Newport at once, we must turn back to Milton Keynes in order to reach Willen, the debased Gothic church of which was built in 1680 from a design, it is said, by Sir Christopher Wren. The manor of Willen at this time belonged to that most famous of schoolmasters, Dr. Busby, and he it was who rebuilt the church at the cost of £5000, the material of the older church being used. He also "erected a building for a library" within the said church, and gave it a present of Communion Plate. Busby arranged that the Vicar was always to be a Westminster student of Christ Church. There is a portrait of Busby at Willen Vicarage. An annual sum of twenty shillings is still expended on bibles for the Willen children under the Doctor's legacy, as amended by the Charity Commissioners. From Willen we cross the Grand Junction Canal to Great Linford, two miles from Newport Pagnell. Little Linford is some way away, beyond Stantonbury and Haversham, and is scarcely worth a visit. It has monuments to the Knapp family. The church at Great Linford is more interesting. There are several effigies and tombs, one to Roger Hunt, who died in 1473, and of him it is stated on another brass that he paved the church. John Mordale, who died in 1611, and Anne, his wife, with their five sons and three daughters, are buried here; their effigies in brass. Two miles further on we are at Newport Pagnell

CHAPTER XXVI

NEWPORT PAGNELL AND GAYHURST.—SIR EVERARD DIGBY

THE first impression of Newport Pagnell is of its bridges, one picturesque stone bridge crossing the Ouse on the road to Northampton, the other an iron structure across the River Lovat. The two rivers give the place an added attraction, and the church and churchyard are well worth more than the hasty visit that many are tempted to pay. Newport Pagnell is a substantial town with good inns, and we might make it a centre for many interesting impressions in a week-end visit. It is served by the London and North Western Railway.

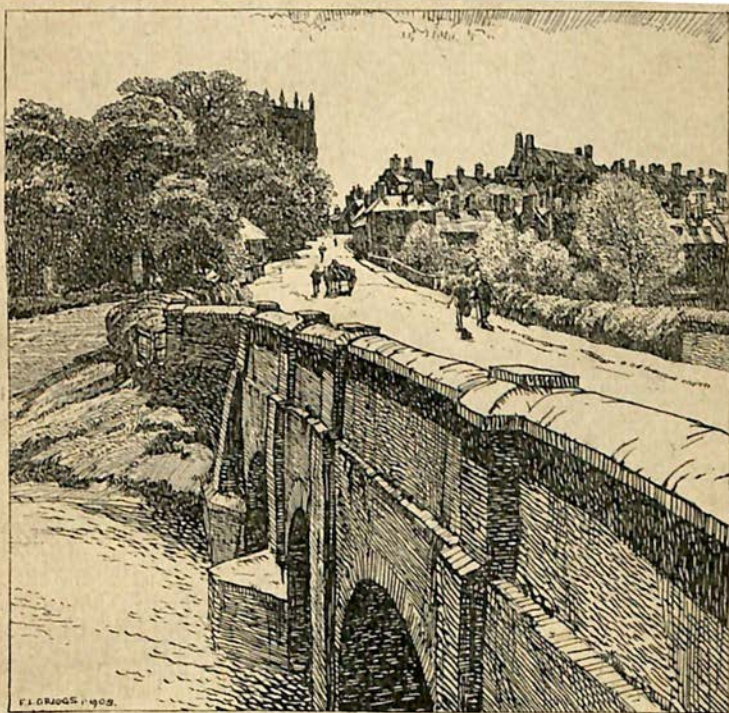
The town has possibly a less ancient origin than the little village of Lathbury on the other side of the Ouse. This was possibly the *Lactodorum* of the Romans, but in any case Roman coins have been found over the whole of the area that includes Lathbury and Newport. The place owes its name to Sir Fulk Paganell, a Norman noble, or to his son Ralph. Ralph Paganell took part with Queen Maud against Stephen, and, moreover, founded the Priory of Newport, or Tickford, as Newport Priory is usually called. Ralph's son Gervase had only a daughter, Hawyse, who married a Somerie and thus the Paganell line ended, leaving only its Norman name to what is now a pleasant little English town. That town became the centre of much conflict in the great Civil War. Prince Rupert held it for Charles, Essex held

it for the Parliament, Cromwell was here in 1644, and later in the same year his son Oliver died here while in garrison. "The young soldier," says Gardiner, "who had fought at Edgehill, was, as one who seems to have known him testifies, 'a civil young gentleman, and the joy of his father.' " Who knows how the history of England might once again have been changed but for this episode in Buckinghamshire—the death of the strong son of Oliver Cromwell of small-pox at Newport Pagnell, leaving the weak Richard to attempt to control the storm at his father's death. Newport Pagnell has yet other interesting personal associations with the Civil War. On the one side there is Sir Kenelm Digby, who was born at Gayhurst less than three miles away—an ardent partisan of the King—on the other side there is Sir Samuel Luke, who was Governor of Newport Pagnell for the Parliament and lives in literature as the prototype of Hudibras. Butler had resided in Sir Luke's family and doubtless had many of his characteristics in mind. In any case in the lines in the first canto—

'Tis sung there is a valiant Mameluke
In foreign lands yclep'd —
To whom we have been oft compar'd,
For person, parts, address, and beard.—

the critics have not hesitated to fill the second line with the name of Sir Samuel Luke. At the end of the Commonwealth we find the name of Arthur Annesley, Lord of the Manor of Newport Pagnell, conspicuous in assisting to bring about the restoration of Charles. Annesley was Lord Mountnorris and Valentia in the Irish peerage and he became Earl of Anglesea and Baron Newport Pagnell in the British peerage at the Restoration. There were to be several Annesleys holding these titles before the great case arose which extinguished the Barony of Newport Pagnell by a decision of the House of Lords. All the world has heard of the peerage case in which James Annesley claimed a father's inheritance from an unscrupulous uncle. Seized by ruffians he was dragged on board

a ship bound for America ; there he was sold for a slave and worked on a plantation for thirteen years. At the age of twenty-six he escaped, found his way to England, published *The Memoirs of an Unfortunate Young Nobleman*, and pursued his claim to the two Irish titles of Mountnorris and Valentia



Newport Pagnell.

and the two English titles of Anglesea and Newport Pagnell. James Annesley died, however, before a final decision could be given. The "wicked uncle" died shortly afterwards, leaving one son, who was only able to make good his claim to the Irish titles, those of Anglesea and Newport Pagnell becoming extinct. The former title has been revived in the Paget family.

The Annesley drama doubtless offered suggestion to Sir Walter Scott in *Guy Mannering*, and it was followed more closely by Charles Reade in *The Wandering Heir*.

Newport once had a castle, no trace of which can now be seen. Some portions of it, however, existed even to the time of the Civil War. It must, however, have been almost destroyed in the days of Henry the Eighth, as the church was then built. It is suggested by Joseph Staines, in his interesting *History of Newport Pagnell*, that the church was built with material from the ruined castle. The monastery or priory has also disappeared. This Priory of Tickford or Tykeford was frequently called the Priory of Newport. It was a "cell" for the great Abbey of St. Martin at Tours in Normandy. Thus as an "alien" priory it came to grief when England lost her French possessions. But it revived and was not finally suppressed until the reign of Henry the Eighth. Even then it did not fall through Thomas Cromwell's confiscations, but earlier and with more dignity. Pope Clement made its endowments a grant to Cardinal Wolsey for the foundation of colleges. Some way from the site there is a house called Tickford Abbey, one resident in which, Thomas Hooton, built himself a family vault in the grounds. The Church of England burial service was read over his remains, as the local clergy accepted the theory that the ground was consecrated, as here had possibly been the cemetery of the monks. Sheahan points out that there are four private burial grounds at Newport, the next in merit being that of Dr. Remy, to whom Cowper refers in one of his letters. He gave instructions that he should be buried in his garden. An obelisk marks the spot at Green End. While we are on the subject of graves it may be mentioned that in 1619 there was found in the north aisle of the church a man's body, perfect in every detail, "all the concavous parts, and the hollowness of every bone being filled up with solid lead." The skull with the lead in it weighed 30 lb. 6 oz. This is not a rare phenomenon. It is supposed that the leaden coffin was struck by lightning, which

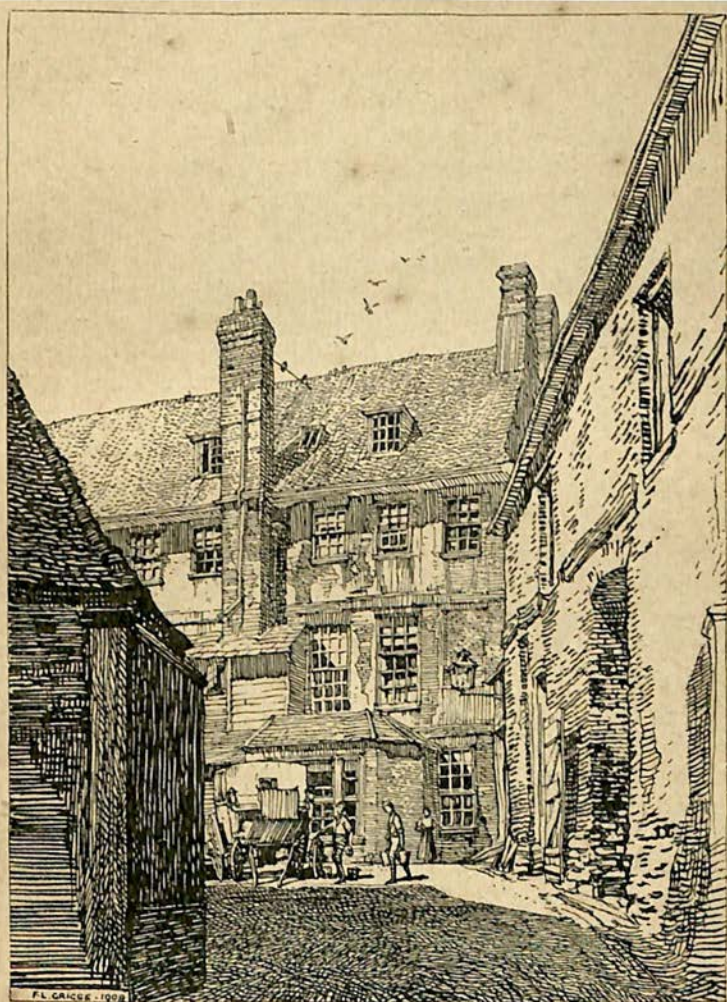
may have caused the lead to melt and to take this extraordinary course. In the beautiful churchyard, which slopes down to the River Lovat, there is a tomb to one Thomas Abbot Hamilton, who died in 1788 at the age of 32. At the request of his brother-in-law, Dr. Greatheed, a friend of Cowper's, the poet wrote the following cheerless epitaph:—

Pause here and think, a monitory rhyme
Demands one moment of thy fleeting time ;
Consult life's silent clock, thy bounding vein :
Seems it to say health here has long to reign.
Hast thou the vigour of thy youth ? an eye
That beams delight ? a heart untaught to sigh ?
Yet fear : Youth, oft-times healthful and at ease,
Anticipates a day it never sees ;
And many a Tomb like Hamilton's, aloud
Exclaims " Prepare thee for an early shroud."

Another tomb in the churchyard has a more tragic history. It is that of John Perrott, who was a native of Newport Pagnell and kept a linen-draper's shop. He was proceeded against for fraudulent bankruptcy, and among other charges made against him was that he had secreted a paper parcel full of banknotes. The eighteenth century, however, was not kinder to bankrupts than to forgers, and Perrott was sentenced to be hanged, which sentence was duly carried out in November, 1761, in Smithfield, after which his body was brought back to Newport Pagnell to be buried. There were experts in the bankrupt laws of that time who considered that the unhappy man was wrongfully convicted. But he shared the fate of the more famous Dr. Dodd, who—also associated at the time with Buckinghamshire—was hanged for forgery sixteen years later. In the fine church we are struck by the beauty of the stained glass windows, but there are singularly few tombs of interest. Most of the tombs have been robbed of their brasses, and altogether from that point of view the exterior of the church is more attractive than the interior. The most interesting tomb in Newport Pagnell is in the Congregational chapel. This is to a former minister, the Rev.

William Bull, the friend of Cowper, and there is a medallion portrait. We are informed that he became pastor of this church in 1764 and died in 1814. Cowper, the friend by whom his memory will always live, died fourteen years before him, but his tribute to Bull is well known: "He was a Dissenter, a liberal one, a man of letters and genius, master of a fine imagination, a man of erudition and ability." His *Life* was written by his son, Josiah Bull, who presided over the Independents of Newport Pagnell until his death. Another great Nonconformist of the town was John Gibbs, who was vicar of Newport during the Commonwealth, but he was speedily removed at the Restoration, apparently on the plea that he had refused the Communion to certain parishioners. The ejected vicar's own version was that he had refused it to a notorious drunkard. In any case, John Gibbs became the first nonconformist minister of Newport, gathering his flock in a barn behind his house. He died in 1699, so much respected by all the nonconformists of his day that in the deeds of the Baptist meeting-house at Olney it is expressly mentioned, "that no person shall ever be chosen pastor, who shall differ in his religious sentiments from the Rev. John Gibbs of Newport Pagnell." A funeral sermon by him, dated 1698, is before us, preached in that year "for Mr. William Hartley, of Newport Pagnel, Apothecary." It says much for the catholicity of the community he had left in the closing years of the seventeenth century that he was buried in the parish church and that an altar tomb was erected to his memory. This would have been impossible a few years earlier or a few years later. John Gibbs must have known Bunyan, and he had certainly seen Cromwell more than once. A board is preserved in the present chapel, which stands very near Gibbs's original meeting-house, and it is claimed for this board that it formed a part of Bunyan's pulpit. It has a brass plate with a quotation from Cowper upon it:

Reverse the man, whose Pilgrim walks the road,
And guides the progress of the soul to God.



The Swan, Newport Pagnell.

We are shown also the barn in which the Independents originally worshipped, and the remains of the old meeting-

house. We must not neglect to mention the hospital—"Queen Anne's Hospital"—named after Anne of Denmark, the Queen of James the First. An earthquake occurred at Newport Pagnell in 1795. It was recorded in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for that year, "At the Neptune Hotel the bells jingled and great alarm was felt for a while, but all passed off without damage."

Before taking the road from Newport Pagnell to Olney we may well visit five villages on the Northampton road—Lathbury, Tyringham, Filgrave, Gayhurst, and Stoke-Goldington, and if it is our determination to visit Olney direct from London we may return by Sherington to Newport Pagnell. Sherington and Emberton are the only two villages in the five mile direct journey to Olney, although we must step on one side to the right to visit Chicheley. Lathbury is a mile on our way when we have crossed the river Ouse. The church is in the park of Lathbury House, a quarter of a mile from the village. The original Lathbury House, now destroyed, was built by Sir William Andrewes in the reign of James the First. Sir William died in 1625. William, his son and successor, married one of those seven hundred descendants of Sir Thomas and Lady Temple of Stowe noted by Fuller. Their son, Sir Henry Andrewes, had a daughter whose memory is preserved in the church by a lengthy epitaph. Margaret Andrewes was only fourteen years of age when she died in 1680. A short time before her death she asked, we are told, if she had any property she could bequeath, and being informed that she had, she begged her parents to bestow "forty pounds upon the poor of Newport Pagnell, fifteen pounds upon those of her own parish, and that the chancel of Lathbury church might be paved with marble." We are further told that at the time of her death "Charles, afterwards Duke of Somerset, was on the road towards Lathbury, to pay his addresses to her." Sir Henry in every case carried out his dying daughter's request, and the chancel is paved with black and white marble. Many

of these slabs of white marble serve as memorials to the Andrewes family. A few lines from Margaret's epitaph may well be quoted here :

Her soul doth rest above, her flesh below,
Her name remains on earth and shall do so ;
Her name still lives and breathes a pleasant scent,
And shall outwear this marble monument.

Margaret's cousin, Lady Leigh, is also buried in the chancel :—

Here Elizabeth Lee of Leigh, Barrones of Stonly In her father's grave
lyeth.

This cousin, Elizabeth Browne, was married at sixteen years of age to Lord Leigh and had a very unhappy life, dying at the age of twenty-seven. The last of the Andrewes family to reside at Lathbury was Henry Andrewes, who died in 1744. One of his daughters, Jane Symes, lived for some years at Lathbury and was so keen a Jacobite that when the Duke of Cumberland was on his way to face Charles Edward in 1745, she refused to open to him a gate and private bridge on her estate and he had to use force. The Duke declared that "if any man, woman or child would say that the inhabitants of that house were Papists, he would plant his cannon against it and blow it to atoms." No one gave the required information and the Duke's followers contented themselves with forcing the gate and destroying many trees and shrubs. In the church are some wall paintings.

From Lathbury we go on to Tyringham where the park is separated only by the road from Gayhurst. There is a bridge across the Ouse here. Tyringham House dates from the eighteenth century. Tyringham, it would seem, possessed only two dwelling-houses before it was united for ecclesiastical purposes with Filgrave, and it is called in some guides Tyringham-cum-Filgrave. It is mentioned in Domesday as Telingha. The family of Tyringham flourished here until 1685. There was a Sir Roger Tyringham, who was Sheriff of Bucking-

hamshire in the reign of Edward the Second. The house was pulled down and rebuilt in 1792. The lawn slopes to the river. The church in the park was rebuilt in 1808. There are in it tombs of the Praeds, who took the name of Tyingham, and there is a brass to John Tyingham, a crusader. Filgrave, a considerable walk to the north-east, has no remains of its former church, but the churchyard is still to be seen. When Browne Willis visited the place in 1730, the tower and part of the walls were standing. An antiquarian has stated that "the sole cause for the desecration and destruction of this church originated in the parsimony or apathy of the inhabitants in the reign of Queen Elizabeth."

Let us return to Tyingham and cross the road to Gayhurst, so tragically associated with the Digby family. It is a beautiful park with an Elizabethan mansion, as attractive now as when Cowper visited it from Olney—five miles away—in 1779. Writing to his friend, William Unwin, the poet says:—

"Your mother and I last week made a trip in a post-chaise to Gayhurst, the seat of Mr. Wrighte, about four miles off. He understood that I did not much affect strange faces, and sent over his servant on purpose to inform me that he was going into Leicestershire, and that if I chose to see the gardens, I might gratify myself without danger of seeing the proprietor. I accepted the invitation, and was delighted at all I found there. The situation is happy, the gardens elegantly disposed, the hot-house in the most flourishing state, and the orange trees the most captivating creations of the kind I ever saw."

Cowper and his cousin, Lady Hesketh, dined at Gayhurst, in 1786, and Newton made it one of the charges against Cowper as evidence that he was leading a godless life that he had visited at Gayhurst. This is, however, to digress from our own visit. Cowper does not mention the yew trees that flourished in his day as in ours. Some of them are 500 years old and form an impressive background to the house, which all may see, for every facility is given even for motor cars to pass through the park. There is a yew walk still known as Digby Walk. The manor descended through the

Navers to the Nevills and thence to the Mulshos. May Mulsho, sole heiress, married in 1596 Everard Digby, of Stoke, in the county of Rutland. The house was apparently built for the young couple. If Everard was, as is stated by Jardine and others, born in 1581, he was only fifteen years of age at his marriage. If, as is more probable, he was born in 1579, he was but seventeen, and in any case he was only twenty-six when he embarked on the unhappy plot which ended in his tragic death. Many writers, assuming 1581 as the date of his birth, make him out to be only twenty-five at his execution on January 31st, 1606.¹ His elder son, Kenelm, was born in 1603, and in that year Everard Digby was knighted by the new King, James the First. His friend Father John Gerard is our authority for Digby's life at Gayhurst or Gothurst, as it was called at this period. Father Gerard's influence made him a Roman Catholic, as his father and mother had been before him; Lady Digby, who came of a Protestant family, also joined that Church. Father Gerard was chaplain at the house of Mrs. Vaux at Stoke Poges. Sir Everard furnished a chapel here at Gayhurst and made one Father John Percy his chaplain. With James's accession things went from bad to worse with the Roman Catholics. Many of them had not expected this from a son of the murdered Mary Stuart. Fines were levied on recusants and much persecution came to them. The young convert commenced to brood in this house at Gayhurst over the cruelties practised on his co-religionists. The critical influence came to him from his friend Robert Catesby, who frequently visited at his cousin's house. That cousin was Tyringham of Tyringham, who lived only three-quarters of a mile away, as we have seen. Another guest joined the party in Thomas Winter, also a man of accomplishments and good family. The three often discussed

¹ "Sir Everard Digby did not live to be twenty-five" (*The Life of a Conspirator, being a Biography of Sir Everard Digby*, by one of his descendants, 1895).

the wrongs of their Church ; but when on a journey Catesby first mooted the idea of clearing off the King and Court through the summary medium of gunpowder, Digby expressed his horror. He afterwards, alas ! fell into line with Catesby and his friends and promised £1,500 towards the rebellion that was to follow the plot. At this time also he employed Nicholas Owen, a Jesuit lay-brother, who was skilful in the invention of priests' hiding-places, to make one at Gayhurst. This "priests' hole" was partially abolished twenty years ago, but it is described by Lipscomb as a movable floor revolving on a pivot. A secret bolt being withdrawn disclosed underneath another room which received light from the lower part of a mullioned window that was not discoverable exteriorly, unless at a very great distance. "From this secret room there were private passages of ingress and egress. Here also were some ingenious cabinets and drawers for the deposit of papers." Lipscomb goes on to call this "a very artful contrivance for the concealment of the parties to the Gunpowder Plot." But when the plans of Digby and his friends were once matured none of them ever saw Gayhurst again, and the whole complex fabric was possibly intended only for the protection of the much hunted priests of those days. During the month prior to the perpetration of the plot two priests were put to death for their religion, being executed with sixteen thieves and eight other malefactors. During October nearly all the conspirators visited Gayhurst, including Guy Fawkes, who was to perpetrate the deed. Fawkes was an Englishman of a good Yorkshire family, and it is only popular ignorance that describes him as "Guido Fawkes" and a Spaniard. The rest of the story of the Gunpowder Plot does not belong to this narrative. Our conspirators, after Fawkes's well-known failure, fled across the country, Catesby incidentally deluding Digby with the lie that the King and Salisbury were dead and that they could now raise the people. The people refused to rise. Digby, we may add, was at Dunchurch, eighty miles from London, at

the time that the explosion was supposed to have occurred. He had travelled to a place a hundred and twenty miles from London when he was arrested. He was brought to London and lodged in the Tower. One letter to his wife tells how bitterly Digby felt the condemnation of the overwhelming majority of his Roman Catholic friends at the plot. In recent years there have been those who questioned if the plot really existed except in the imagination of the Earl of Salisbury, who undoubtedly strengthened his position with James by its discovery. A second Father Gerard of to-day supported this position in a book of great ability, to which the late Dr. Gardiner replied by another. Father Gerard had the last word in a pamphlet, but to most impartial investigators it is clear that there was a plot, although it was only the work of a handful of fanatics goaded on by resentment of the penal laws.

In any case it is impossible to read of the last days of Sir Everard Digby, to read his pathetic verses from the Tower, his letter to his children, the eldest not yet three years old ; his sad speech on his trial in Westminster Hall and his cruel death on the scaffold erected on the west side of St. Paul's Cathedral—a death so cruel that it is a very nightmare to read of it to-day—without feeling that here was expiation indeed for a young man's mad fanaticism. His family, in any case, did not suffer also, as was usual in those days. The widow retained Gayhurst and never re-married. She brought up her two sons Kenelm and John, both of whom came to be knighted, Kenelm in 1623 and John in 1635. Both grew up to be loyal subjects—in a time when disloyalty was at least equally honourable—of the son of the King who had slain their father. Sir John Digby was killed at the battle of Longport in 1645. Sir Kenelm's fate was a much happier one. His early years were spent with his mother at Gayhurst. In 1617 he sailed for Spain with his kinsman, Sir John Digby, who was the English ambassador at Madrid and afterwards became Earl of Bristol. Bristol plays a most prominent part in affairs

all through those interesting pages of Gardiner's *History* which treat of the reign of James the First. His young relative afterwards went to Oxford and finally fell in love with Venetia Stanley, whom he married. After this his story has nothing further to do with Buckinghamshire. Sir Kenelm Digby seems to have been one of the most remarkable men of his age, endowed with every kind of talent and charm, handsome in appearance and gifted with remarkable accomplishments. It was this Digby whose *Observations* on Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* first brought that wonderful book into notice, or rather first led the author to give it to the public at all. The *Religio Medici* was written about 1635 and was printed without Browne's knowledge in 1642. Digby saw a copy and in the space of twenty-four hours wrote his *Observations*, and thus led Sir Thomas Browne to issue an authorised version. It was perhaps in the fashion of Browne's quaint English that Digby was called "this Magazine of all Arts" and "the Ornament of England." His grave in Christ Church, Newgate Street, London, bore the following epitaph :

Under this tomb, the matchless Digby lies ;
Digby the great, the valiant, and the wise ;
This age's wonder for his noble parts,
Skilled in six tongues, and learned in all the arts ;
Born on the day he died, th' eleventh of June,
And that day bravely fought at Scandervon ;
It's rare, that one and the same day should be
His day of birth, of death, of victory.

Sir Kenelm Digby's eldest son died, as did his uncle, fighting for the King in the Civil War. The brother who succeeded to Gayhurst had two daughters, whose husbands in 1704 sold the manor to George Wrighte, son of the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, Sir Nathan Wrighte, a most important personage in Queen Anne's day, but not very interesting to ours. His only connection with Buckinghamshire is that he was buried at Gayhurst. The Wrighte family, which became merged by marriage into that of the Wyndhams,

of Cromer, Norfolk, held the estate for many generations. Their sole interest to us is that one of them showed courtesies to the poet Cowper, as we have seen. There is a pedestal in the grounds with some lines "To the Memory of a Beautifully Mottled Peacock." George Wright built the church in 1728 on the site of an older one. It contains some tombs of the Wright family, including a monument by Roubillac of the Lord Keeper and his son, the former in his robes. We leave Gayhurst House and church behind us and go on to Stoke Goldington, where we are a little over four miles from Newport Pagnell and exactly the same distance from Olney, whither the traveller may go, if he so desire, through Weston Underwood; but we prefer to return to Newport after visiting Stoke Goldington church, pleasantly situated on high ground, with a good view of the village some little distance away. The place was called Stockes in Domesday Book, but Peter de Goldington held law here in Edward the First's time, and hence the present name. An heiress of the Goldingtons married Sir William de Nowers, Lord of Gayhurst, and the manors long went together. The church has no memorials of interest, but in the churchyard a gravestone to John Gadsden, dated 1739, has the following epitaph:

This world's a City full of crooked streets,
Death's ye market-place where all men meet,
If life were merchandise that men could buy,
The rich would always live, the poor might die.

The first two lines come from the old ballad of *Death and the Lady* referred to in *The Vicar of Wakefield* and also in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. The second couplet appears in Wotton's *Remains* as an epigram and in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Variants of the four lines may be found on tombs at fourteen separate places.

The country round Stoke Goldington was thus described by a clerical visitor in 1773:

The country is pleasant; the villages large and populous; but the people poor, ignorant and idle. The highest wages of the labourer in

harvest time is only 1s. 6d. per day without meat. Half of the inhabitants have little more knowledge, save the art of lacemaking, than they were born with. There are no schools for the poor, and they have no means of instruction but at church, where the greater part never come. Those that have any religion are almost all Methodists and fanatics of one sort or another. Taking the whole county I think it remarkably poor and ignorant.

“Large and populous” has scarcely been a term to apply to Stoke Goldington for at least a century. The population at the census of 1801 was 636, and in 1901 it was 629.

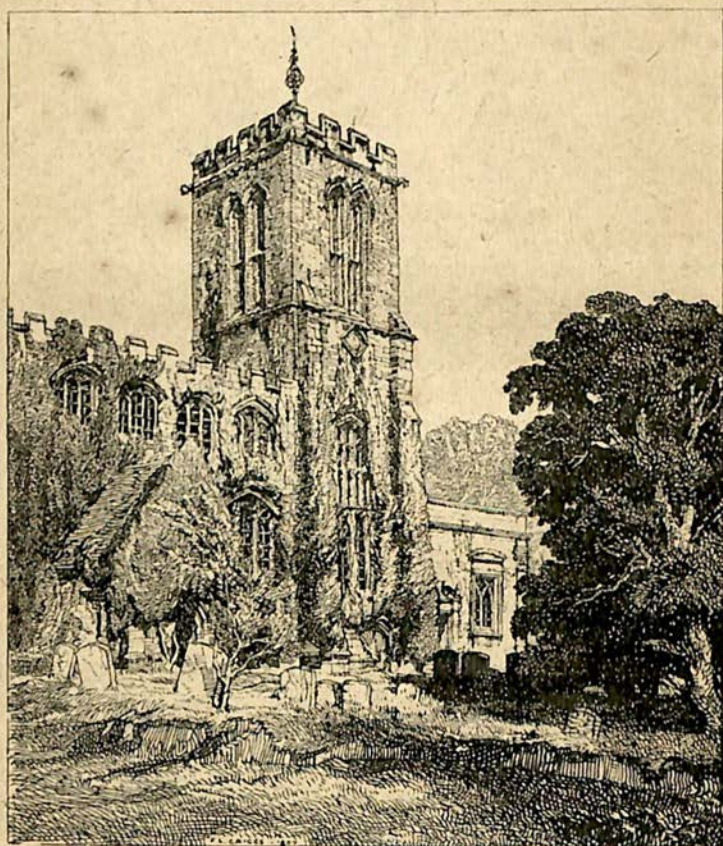
CHAPTER XXVII

OLNEY AND WESTON UNDERWOOD. THE HOMES OF COWPER

FROM Newport Pagnell to Olney is a little less than six miles. We pass through the villages of Sherington and Emberton. The whole country that we visit is sacred to the memory of one of the most interesting of English poets. That accomplished critic, Mr. Stopford Brooke, has lamented that Cowper knew no beautiful scenery, and that all his principal impressions were gathered amid the sandy wastes of Buckinghamshire. The half or more of our county that is supremely beautiful Cowper certainly did not know. Before we reach Sherington let us branch off a little to our right and visit Chicheley, which is exactly two miles from Newport. The picturesque village will well repay a visit, and in the church are two skeleton monuments to make the sensitive shiver. One to Anthony Cave was erected by his widow in 1576. Here the skeleton, or at least very emaciated figure, lies under a canopy. There is a brass to another Cave who died in 1560, also with a skeleton. Henry the Eighth gave the manor of Chicheley to Anthony Cave, "merchant of the staple at Calais," in 1546. One of his daughters married Griffith Hampden, of Great Hampden, to whom we have already referred as the host of Queen Elizabeth.

Two miles on our way to Olney—assuming that we have not turned aside to see Chicheley—we reach Sherington, a

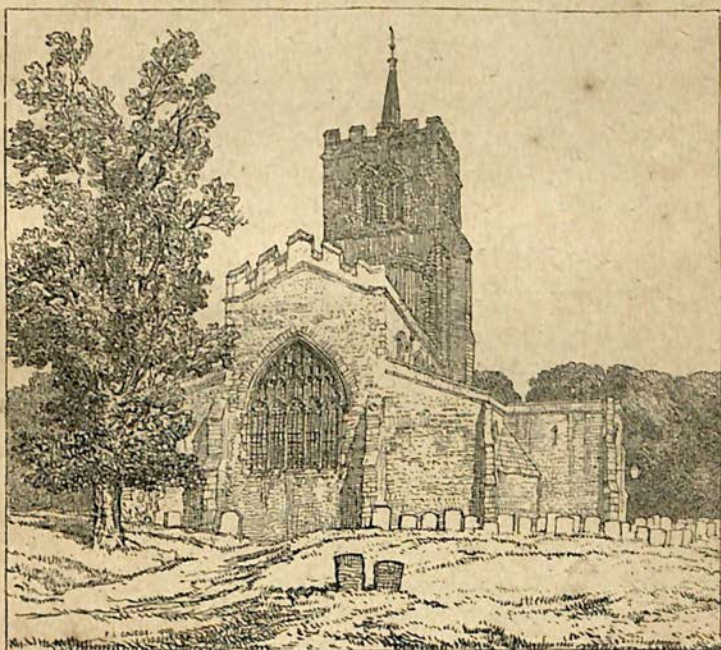
substantial village of thatched cottages. The church is dedicated to St. Laud the Martyr, who is not the famous Archbishop whom many counted a martyr, but a French



Chicheley Church.

bishop of that name. There is little to detain us at Sherington, and we find Emberton two miles further on, where a square clock tower, erected by subscription in 1845, attracts more attention than the church, which is on

high ground to the south-west of the village and is really worth a visit. In this church is a brass effigy of "John Morden," who was rector here at his death in 1410, and here are the words: *John prayeth thee say for him a Paternoster and an Ave.* As a contrast to this, note the inscrip-



Sherington Church.

tion on the clock tower, which reminds us that we are in a land now dear to the Evangelical faith:—

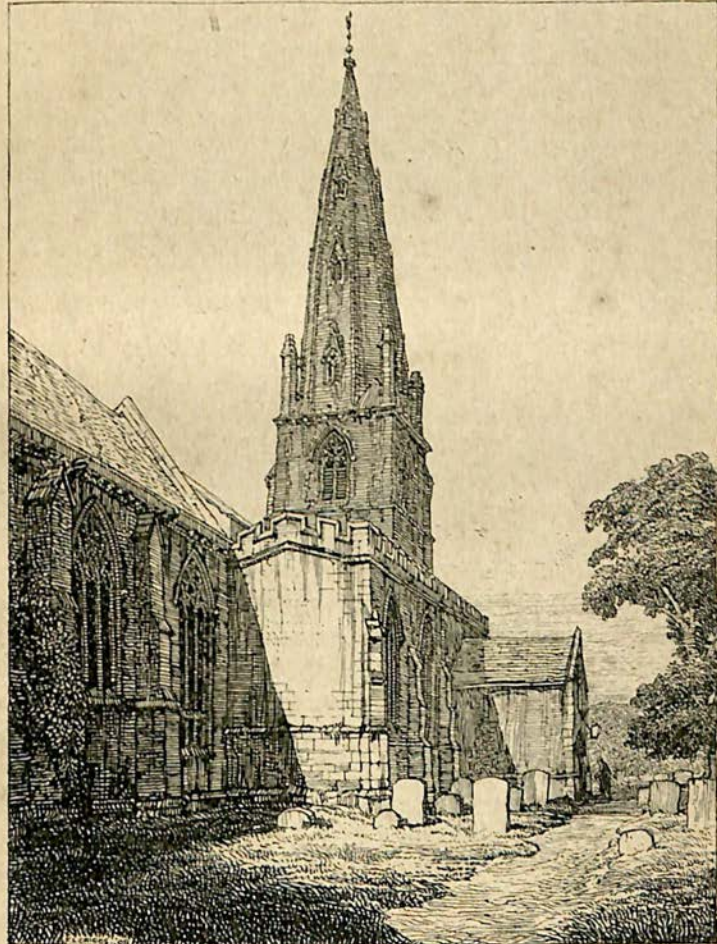
Time's on the wing, how swiftly he speeds his way,
Hast'ning to sink in one continuous day—
Pause, passing trav'ler—what thy destiny
When death unveils a vast eternity?
Live then in Christ—in Christ eternal gain,
No Christ—no hope but everlasting pain!

The spire of Olney Church now lies before us, and we are soon in the town so pleasantly identified with the author of *John Gilpin* and *The Loss of the Royal George*. Indeed, every inch of the country we are now in is associated with Cowper in a very peculiar way. Either in his letters or in his verse we are ever being reminded of some point of the landscape. "Your chamber windows," the poet writes to his cousin, Lady Hesketh, "look over the river, and over the meadows, to a village called Emberton, and command the whole length of a long bridge, described by a certain poet." But the long bridge has become four small ones since the days when Cowper wrote in *The Task* of-

Yonder bridge
That with its wearisome but needful length
Bestrides the wintry floods.

It was rebuilt in 1832. Too much, indeed, of Olney has been rebuilt and changed since Cowper's day. It is a mistake to suppose, as does one writer upon Olney, that this is really Cowper's town as the poet knew it. His house is there, it is true, and his summer-house, although it requires much imagination to think of either as it was in his day. There is a contemporary print of Olney with its Round House, and its Swan Inn, the goal of Cowper's post-boy, "the herald of a noisy world." The High Street had on the side of it a miniature river "composed of two streams, the larger one running from Yardley Road and the smaller one from Spring Lane, meeting opposite where now stands the Cowper Memorial Church." So writes the historian of Olney, and it is easy to insist on other changes, the substitution of slate for thatch on the houses, the disappearance of notable buildings—Olney Court, Olney Park, and the Great House, as it was called. It is more pleasant, however, to note the permanent features when upon a journey in which hero-worship plays no inconsiderable part, and the church, the river, and the landscape remain much the same as in the poet's day. Above all there

is the Cowper Museum, where we may see the house in which Cowper resided for nineteen years. We shall stay at the "Bull"



Olney Church.

Hotel for a night or two, and remember the many references to that inn in Cowper's letters. We shall also visit the church

and note Newton's tomb in the churchyard, see the summer-house, as well as Cowper's home, and finally go on to Weston Underwood, which also has pleasing associations with the poet. The church internally bears little resemblance to the church in which Cowper worshipped. Until a short time ago they did, indeed, show you the pew in which Cowper sat, but that has been removed to the Museum. The pulpit also in which Newton and Scott preached has been replaced by a new one. The church, in fact, has been thoroughly restored, and has little in it to interest us. Externally, too, many changes have been made. Fifteen feet of the spire were rebuilt in 1884, when the weather-cock was removed. In the tail was a bullet, which showed that Olney had one good marksman at least. On this tail was engraved the name "H. Gauntlett, vicar," and the words :

I never crow, but stand to show
Whence winds do blow, 1829.

The weather-cock was regilded and replaced.

The more interesting tombs are in the churchyard. There, above all, is the tomb of John Newton, joint author with Cowper of *Olney Hymns*, and a man who played a very important part in the theological history of our county in the eighteenth century. He became curate of Olney in 1764, his vicar being Moses Browne, who also had a history, if we had space in which to write it. Browne was practically a non-resident vicar after Newton came, although Newton in his first letter from Olney writes to the effect that "Mr. Browne endured the main brunt of the opposition"—presumably to Evangelical teaching. Browne edited Walton's *Compleat Angler* at the suggestion of Dr. Johnson, to whom he was introduced by Cave, of *The Gentleman's Magazine*. It seems almost as incongruous that the Reverend Moses Browne should have commenced his public life with a farce entitled *All Be-devilled* as that his curate, the Reverend John Newton, should have commenced his in the African slave trade! Newton was for fifteen years

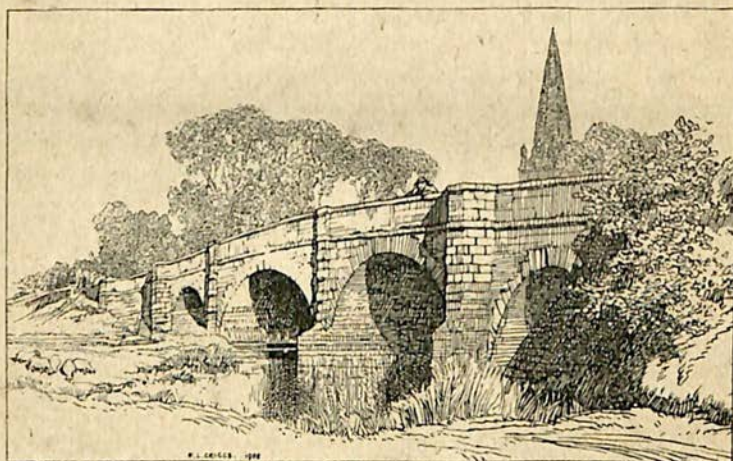
curate of Olney, after which he became vicar of a London church—St. Mary Woolnoth. He died in 1807, and was buried beside his wife in a vault in the church. In 1893 the church vaults of St. Mary Woolnoth were cleared of coffins for re-interment in Ilford Cemetery, and it was then decided to transfer the remains of Newton and his wife to Olney. The coffin plate with the inscription—

The Revd. John Newton Rector of this Church died 21st Decr. 1807 in the 83rd year of his age—

was placed in the church of St. Mary Woolnoth, London, while over the grave at Olney we now find a massive granite monument weighing ten tons. The figure of Thomas Scott has already flitted many times across these pages, and we have seen his grave in the church of Aston Sandford. He was curate of Olney for four years from 1781, and was chaplain to the Lock Hospital of London, and had written large instalments of his *Commentaries* there before he was instituted to the living at Aston Sandford in 1801. Incidentally I may mention that while during his lifetime nearly two hundred thousand pounds had been expended in England and America upon volumes of these once-famous *Commentaries*, the author never received a penny for his labour. We have referred to "H. Gauntlett, vicar," who was here from 1815 to 1834. Gauntlett's son, Henry, became a quite celebrated musician. He played the organ in Olney Church from his ninth year.

We have, however, become accustomed, and rightly, to think of Olney as Cowper's town. The spirit of that gentle and much-loved poet glorifies the whole of our environment while we are in this region of the county. From the "Bull" Inn a few yards' walk across the triangular market-place will take us to the house, then, as now, one of its most conspicuous buildings. Here Cowper lived for nineteen years with his friend Mrs. Unwin and her daughter. Newton, the curate-friend, had arranged everything, and when the friends had arrived in Olney, on September 14th, 1767, they resided with him until

this house in the Market Place, then known as Orchard Side, was ready. Newton himself did not remove to the new vicarage, which is still extant, until the following month. In 1770 we find in Newton's letters a reference to one of the servants having small-pox at Orchard Side, and to the fact that Cowper and Mrs. Unwin had removed to the "Bull." "What can you both do at the Bull," he writes, "surrounded with noise and nonsense day and night." Soon after this



Olney Bridge.

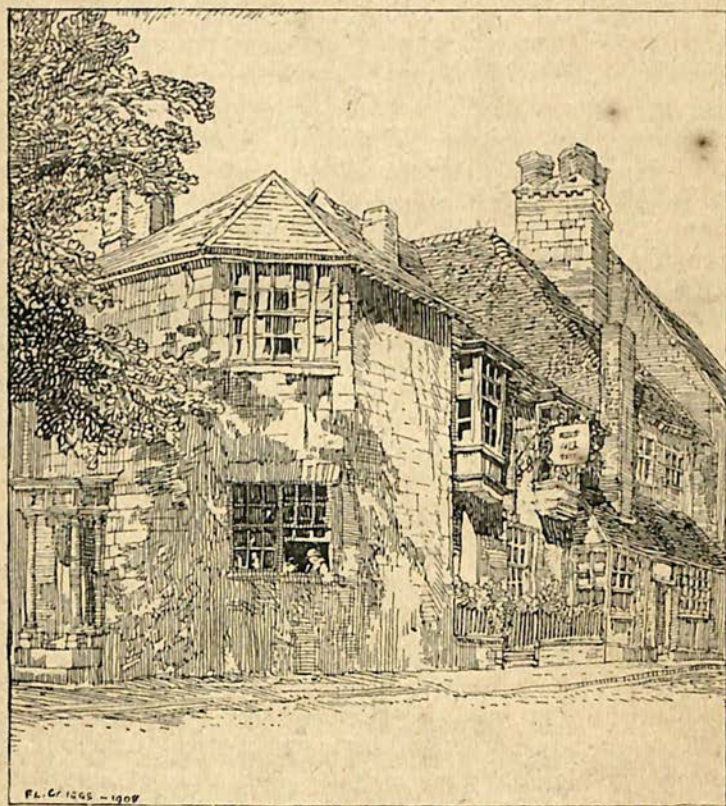
the "Great House" being empty Newton took it for Evangelical services, and Cowper frequently assisted at public prayers here. When Miss Unwin married the Reverend Matthew Rowley and went to live at Dewsbury there was thought that Cowper should marry Mrs. Unwin, and actual intention on the poet's part to do so. But a return of Cowper's insanity put this out of the question. Cowper's sojourn at Olney need not be described here; it will be found in his poems and his letters, where many of his impressions of the town are told with matchless power. The humour and pathos that underlie life in a

small country town have never, indeed, been more perfectly presented than in the letters. For detail of scenery that has only a certain quiet charm to recommend it Cowper's poems are the best of all guide-books. Olney inspired the scenery of *The Task*, and it gave us those inimitable letters written upon so slight a foundation of action and event, and still so charming that they fully entitle Cowper to the position of our greatest English letter writer. Who does not recall what is perhaps the best known of all these letters, the one written to Newton describing the visit to Olney of the famous William Wyndham Grenville, afterwards Lord Grenville. As a young man Grenville became Paymaster-General in his cousin William Pitt's first administration, and he was a candidate for Buckinghamshire in 1784. Thus Cowper describes him:—

Mr. Grenville, advancing toward me, shook me by the hand with a degree of cordiality that was extremely seducing. As soon as he, and as many more as could find chairs, were seated, he began to open the intent of his visit. I told him I had no vote, for which he readily gave me credit. I assured him I had no influence, which he was not equally inclined to believe, and the less, no doubt, because Mr. Ashburner, the draper, addressing himself to me at this moment, informed me that I had a great deal. Supposing that I could not be possessed of such a treasure without knowing it, I ventured to confirm my first assertion, by saying, that if I had any I was utterly at a loss to imagine where it could be, or wherein it consisted. Thus ended the conference. Mr. Grenville squeezed me by the hand again, kissed the ladies, and withdrew. He kissed likewise the maid in the kitchen, and seemed upon the whole a most loving, kissing, kind-hearted gentleman.

Yet it must be admitted that Cowper did not find Olney an ideal spot. The winters were trying, the house was damp, and, indeed, Cowper called it a "well," and so, after nineteen years—in 1786—the poet and his friend of many years, Mrs. Unwin, made a journey of two miles to Weston Underwood. Before we follow them there, let us take a look at the house in which they so long resided. The building in Cowper's day was grimly impressive. It had a cornice and imitation battlements that quite hid the roof. Cowper and Mrs. Unwin occupied one

half of it only—the right-hand half. The custodian will show you the parlour in which Cowper received his friends, the poet's bedroom, and many other intimate details of life in this



The "Boot" Inn, Olney.

house more than a century ago. On April 25th, 1900, being the centenary of Cowper's death, the home of Cowper was converted into a museum, and the occasion was pleasantly celebrated in the little town. The museum contains many relics of the poet, all in good taste. There is a library of

Cowper literature, a good collection of portraits and autographs, and we find also the pew from the gallery in Olney church in which the poet was wont to sit. This was removed here in 1904. The garden at the back of the house has been greatly curtailed since Cowper's day. To reach the famous "summer-house" we walk through a side street to the house of a courteous butcher in whose garden this summer-house now stands. This means that the original garden, which extended to the grounds of the Vicarage, has been cut in halves, and a high wall to-day separates the garden of the Cowper House from the garden of the butcher, where we are permitted to visit the summer-house. It is a tiny building of stone and cement, with red tiles, the whole propped up by two wooden beams. It bears but a moderate resemblance to the summer-house as we see it in old engravings.

Olney has pleasant associations with the name of Collingridge, for Thomas Collingridge, who printed his first bills in this town in 1833 and his first pamphlet in the form of a funeral sermon upon the vicar, Henry Gauntlett, came to London and founded a famous firm which became the proprietors of the *City Press*. A son of Thomas Collingridge gave the Cowper House to Olney as a museum.

From Olney it is a pleasant walk by the road to Weston Underwood, which lies nearly two miles south-west of Olney. But first let us not neglect a walk to the north of the town, to Yardley Chase, where still stands the old oak—called "Judith," after a niece of William the Conqueror—which Cowper has immortalised in his poem of *Yardley Oak*:

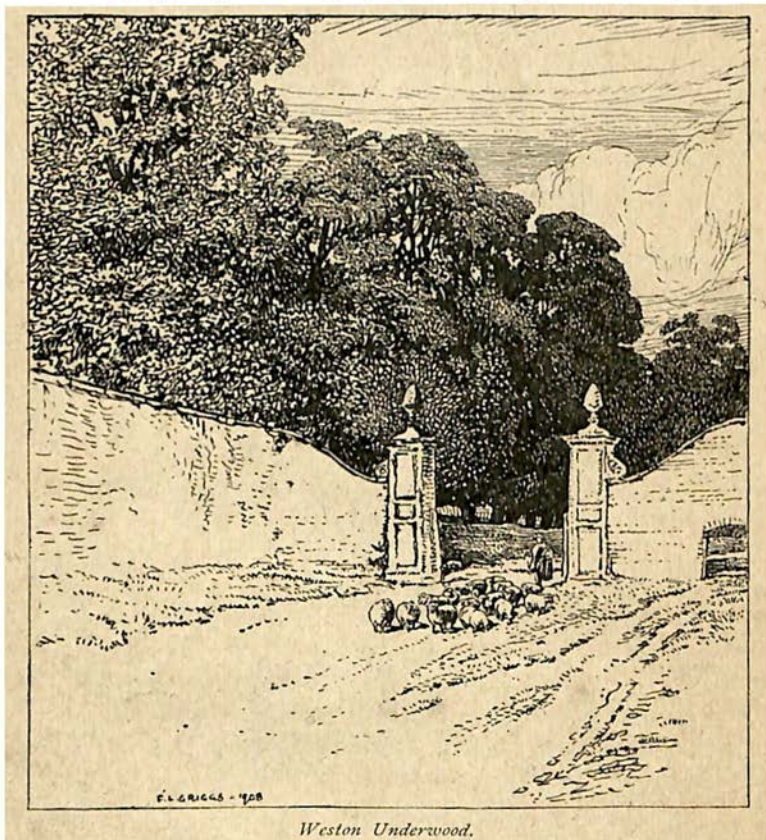
Time made thee what thou wast, king of the woods,
And time hath made thee what thou art—a cave
For owls to roost in.

It is thus Cowper writes of the spot to Lady Hesketh:

I walked with him yesterday on a visit to an oak on the borders of Yardley Chase, an oak which I often visit, and which is one of the wonders that I show to all who come this way, and have never seen it.

I tell them all that it is a thousand years old, verily believing it to be so, though I do not know it.

At Weston Hall resided two Throckmortons, John (afterwards Sir John) and his brother George. Both took to



Cowper, and the poet found them "peerless" neighbours. They were Roman Catholics, but Cowper's toleration was one of his many charms, and not only did he find good comradeship in their society, but Lady Throckmorton and her chaplain, Dr. Grogson, copied out some of his translation of Homer for

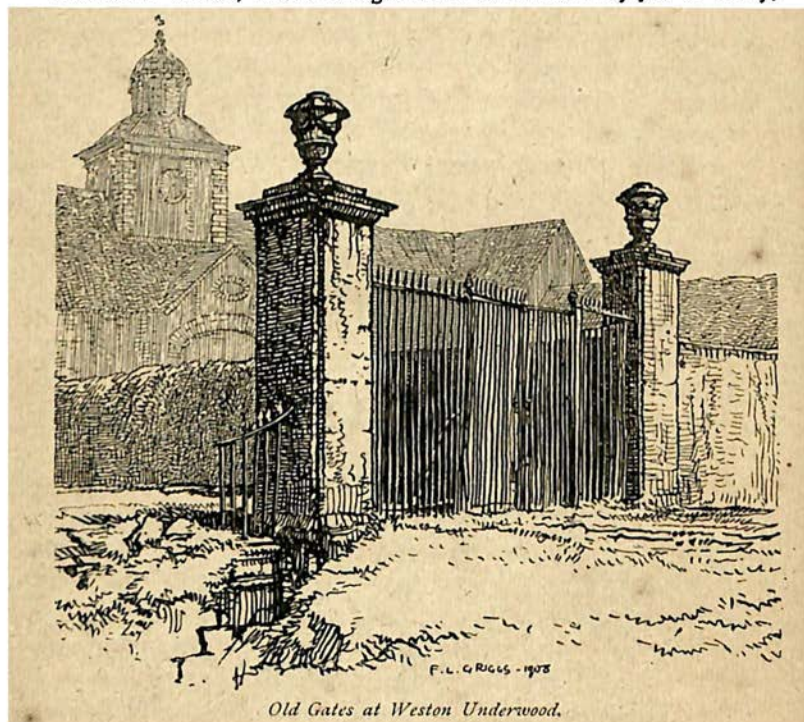
him. It would be possible to write at great length concerning the Throckmortons—a singularly interesting family. One of them had the rare good fortune to escape after a trial for high treason—a rare event enough in Tudor times. This was Sir Nicholas, who in Queen Mary's reign was charged with participation in the Wyatt conspiracy. Nicholas was acquitted, but fined £2,000 notwithstanding. He is supposed to have died of the plague in 1570, but Fuller says "at supper, eating of sallad, not without suspicion of poison, the rather because happening in the house of one, no mean artist in that faculty, Robert, Earl of Leicester." Then there was Francis Throckmorton, who was executed at Tyburn in Queen Elizabeth's reign. His treason was said to have been discovered by an intercepted letter from Mary Queen of Scots. Then there was Sir Robert Throckmorton, who married Dorothy, daughter of Sir Francis Fortescue, of Salden, the site of whose fine house we have seen. This Sir Robert lost all his estates in the Civil War. His son, another Francis, recovered them. He lies buried here at Weston, as does the heart of his son, a third Francis, who died at Bruges in 1676. This Francis's brother, Sir Robert, is also buried at Weston. He it was who rebuilt Weston House and gave six bells to the church. He died in 1720. It was his grandson, another Sir Robert, who was the friend of Cowper. His two brothers each succeeded him in the baronetcy. Sir Robert died in 1819, Sir George in 1826, and Sir Charles in 1840. It was Sir Charles Throckmorton who pulled down Weston House, revealing incidentally the existence of a priests' hole, that had been unknown to the family for generations.

In August, 1786, then, Cowper and Mrs. Unwin removed to Weston, where you may still see the house and are even permitted to visit the bedroom in which Cowper wrote upon the window-shutter :

Farewell, dear scenes, for ever closed to me ;
Oh ! for what sorrows must I now exchange ye,

The writing was retraced soon after Cowper left Weston Underwood, July 22nd, 1795. In anticipation of the change from Olney Cowper wrote to his friend Hill :

Mr. Throckmorton's grounds will afford us good air, and good walking room in the winter ; two advantages which we have not enjoyed at Olney,



Old Gates at Weston Underwood.

where I have no neighbours with whom I can converse, and where, seven months in the year, I have been imprisoned by dirty and impassable ways, till both my health and Mrs. Unwin's have suffered materially.

"One of the prettiest villages in the kingdom" is Cowper's description of Weston Underwood, but the village has undergone modifications since his day. The house of the Throckmortons has disappeared. The family which had

lived in Weston since the days when Thomas Throckmorton married Margaret, daughter and heiress of Sir Thomas Olney in 1446 have disappeared into another county. There is only a gateway to remind us of departed glories. But we may wander through the pleasant grounds, which still contain fragments of statuary and two monumental urns. One of these last bears an epitaph to Sir John Throckmorton's pointer :

Here lies one who never drew
Blood himself, yet many slew ;

and the other has Cowper's *Epitaph on "Fop"* :

Though once a puppy, and though Fop by name,
Here moulders one whose bones some honour claim,
No sycophant, although of spaniel race,
And though no hound, a martyr to the chase—
Ye squirrels, rabbits, leverets, rejoice,
Your haunts no longer echo to his voice ;
This record of his fate exulting view,
He died worn out with vain pursuit of you.
" Yes "—the indignant shade of Fop replies—
" And worn with vain pursuit man also dies."

It is painful to recall Cowper's departure from Weston into Norfolk—to Swaffham, and finally to East Dereham, where he died five years after leaving Weston. He is buried by the side of Mary Unwin in East Dereham church, but it is with the landscape of Olney and Weston that we must ever associate his name. Other poets have added interest to scenery that others have admired before them. Here at Olney and Weston our interest is in the scenery that we are privileged to see with the eyes of the poet.

We have visited Weston Underwood by road and we return partially by the park, but before doing so let us visit the church which contains monuments to the Throckmortons and to their predecessors the Olneys. There is a brass inscription to John Olney, Lord of Weston and Olney, who is stated to have died in 1405, but possibly died twelve years

earlier. It is not of much importance to us, although perhaps it made much difference to John if he really did enjoy those five years of the fifteenth century. Elizabeth Hungerford, who died in 1553, has lost her head in the interval. Her "brass" was reproduced in Lipscomb's *History*. It was a very pretty head and a very dainty head-gear. They are now perhaps adorning the mantelpiece of some enterprising collector—where, one knows not. At "D'na" Elizabetha Hungerford's feet are her five daughters. There is a mural tablet to Father Gregson. Many members of the Higgins family lie here. They lived at Turvey Hall or Abbey, over the border in Bedfordshire.

Let us also before returning to Olney go on yet another mile to Ravenstone, an extremely interesting village and church. The curate, by the way, in Cowper's day was John Buchanan, who resided at Weston, in the house that is now the inn called "Cowper's Oak." Ravenstone once had a Priory of the Order of St. Augustine, founded in the reign of the Third Henry and suppressed in the reign of the Eighth of that name. This suppression was some years before the Dissolution of the Monasteries, for it was by a Bull of the Pope in 1524, and the revenues were given to Cardinal Wolsley to endow his colleges at Oxford and Ipswich. In 1588 Ravenstone came into the hands of Sir Moyle Finch. One of Sir Moyle Finch's sons was Sir Heneage Finch, who was Speaker of the House of Commons in the first Parliament of Charles the First. His son was Heneage Finch, first Earl of Nottingham and Lord Chancellor in the reign of Charles the Second. This is the Finch who was buried in Ravenstone church in 1682. The church stands on a hill near the site of the old Priory. Many of the Finch family, some of whom attained to high positions, are buried in the same vault with the Lord Chancellor, but of him only is there any record. We see under a canopy supported by black marble columns a semi-recumbent life-size figure in white marble attired in his

robes of office ; and we may read the official verdict upon his career in the English and the Latin tongues. We are told of his "manly and unaffected eloquence," his "universal learning and uncorrupted justice," of his "most exemplary piety," and of his "large and diffusive charity, not equalled by any that have gone before him." Some old almshouses in the village testify to his charity—of a kind ; but Finch, although



Ravenstone.

he has had his apologists in our day, was not all that his epitaph describes him. Unlike most of the great names associated with Buckinghamshire, his has no place in the records of the struggle for civil and religious liberty. As Solicitor-General, Lord Keeper, and Lord Chancellor successively, he fought on behalf of injustice, intolerance, and even of cruelty through some of the worst years of our country's history. There is another interesting name associated with

Ravenstone. This is of one of its vicars, Thomas Seaton, who came here in 1721 and was buried in the churchyard in 1741. A tombstone records his virtues in a lengthy Latin epitaph. He founded the Seatonian prize for sacred poetry at Cambridge, which provided that the subject should be the best English poem on the attributes of the Supreme Being or some other sacred subject. Most of these poems have been published. Seaton published many sermons and hymns.

Returning to Olney the way we have suggested, there yet remains for us a pleasant tour northwards to Warrington, thence to Lavendon, Cold Brayfield, Newton Blossomville, and Clifton Reynes, before we reluctantly conclude our all too hurried journey through this interesting county. Warrington is but a hamlet of Olney which was once called at times Oulney-cum-Warrington. We may reach Lavendon by passing through it; otherwise it would not be worth a visit in spite of its old cottages; but we are nearer than at Lavendon to Lavendon Grange, which was built in 1626 on the site of Lavendon Abbey, a religious foundation which dated back to the time of Henry the Second, when a Norman baron, John de Bidun, endowed it. The abbey was suppressed at the time of the Reformation, and here, as elsewhere, we are struck with the decay that had come to the monastic system when it fell to pieces in England. There were only nine priests and two novices here at the Dissolution. Lavendon Grange once belonged to the family from which Sir Isaac Newton sprang; that great man was a frequent visitor here. Lavendon is three miles from Olney. It once boasted a castle as well as an abbey, but no fragment of the abbey remains and of the castle only the suggestion of a moat. There were ruins when Browne Willis wrote, but then, as now, a farm occupied the site. We know that John de Bidun, who founded the abbey, resided at Lavendon Castle, but we know nothing more of the castle and cannot repeople it, as we could wish, by the aid of old chronicles. The well-

placed church is the centre of the village—the most northern in the county—is the one tie with that remote past. There is Saxon work in its tower, and in spite of restorations there is over all a suggestion of remote antiquity. The principal restoration took place in 1859. There are monuments to some members of the Newton family in the church. Hence we bear southward to Cold Brayfield, which was, we are told, part of the lands of Judith, the Conqueror's niece, after whom Yardley Oak is named. It was held from her by Gilbert de Blossomville, who gave his name to the next village. The church, though old, is uninteresting, and we hasten on for half a mile to Newton Blossomville, where the river Ouse runs past the churchyard and offers a picturesque impression. The famous William Warburton was rector here from 1726 to 1728, long years before he became the friend and defender of Pope, the never ceasing controversialist and the distinguished Bishop of Gloucester.

Our next and last village is Clifton Reynes, less than two miles from Olney, and to Cowper a favourite spot for a walk. The poet often mentions it in his letters. One Thomas Jones was curate of Clifton Reynes. He is referred to in that bright rhyming epistle that the poet addressed to Newton in 1781 :

Mrs. Jones proposes, ere July closes, that she and her sister, and her Jones Mister, and we that are here, our course shall steer, to dine in the Spinnie; but for a guinea, if the weather should hold, so hot and so cold, we had better by far stay where we are. For the grass then grows, while nobody mows (which is very wrong), so rank and long, that so to speak, 'tis at least a week, if it happens to rain, ere it dries again.

The church is quite exceptionally interesting. And so we part from our county of Buckinghamshire with a remarkable example of one of its most striking features, the number of quiet, obscure churches that it contains, glorified by stately tombs and memorials of well-nigh forgotten men who ruled England when our country was guided by the strong hand and by the unanimous acceptance of might as right. About 1275

Joan de Borard brought the manor by marriage to Thomas Reynes ; hence its name. The Reynes family were here until 1673, but the manor-house has disappeared. Well into the eighteenth century, however, the coats of arms of the Reynes family ornamented the windows of the church. Nearly all have been destroyed. There is, however, a very handsome font, and in the north aisle a fine canopied recess with two oaken effigies—a knight in armour with his wife. There is no inscription, but it is supposed that these are Sir Thomas de Reynes and his wife, he being a son, presumably, of the Thomas who married Joan de Borard. We also see between the two arches in the north chancel two fine altar tombs. One has life-size effigies of a knight and his lady carved in white stone. Over this tomb, which possibly represents Sir John Reynes and his wife Catherine, are a helmet and breastplate, while on either side are carved figures. The other tomb has figures carved in wood, possibly Ralph de Reynes and his wife Amabel—but all this is guess-work. It is interesting, however, to note that the monuments to Ralph and Thomas Reynes are the only wooden effigies—possibly they were once covered with thin metal—to be found in this county. The church also contains a brass effigy to Sir John Reynes, dated 1428.

Clifton Reynes is an admirable microcosm of the distinctive characteristic of Buckinghamshire which we have tried to emphasise, because it blends an old world chivalry with the modern literary note. That modern note may be found in the presence here of Lady Austen, who was staying at Clifton Reynes with her sister, Mrs. Jones, the curate's wife, when she first met Cowper in Olney. Thus began the friendship which gave us *The Task* and *John Gilpin*. How more fittingly can we conclude these jottings concerning the least commercial of all English counties, the county, moreover, which has been pre-eminently the home of poets—of Milton, Waller, Gray, Shelley, and Cowper—than by this last poet's eulogy upon the simple country life which Buckingham-

shire—in a sense so remote from London and yet now so near
—gave to him in his happiest years?—

'Tis pleasant through the loop-holes of retreat
To peep at such a world. To see the stir
Of the great Babel and not feel the crowd.
To hear the roar she sends through all her gates
At a safe distance, where the dying sound
Falls a soft murmur on the injured ear.

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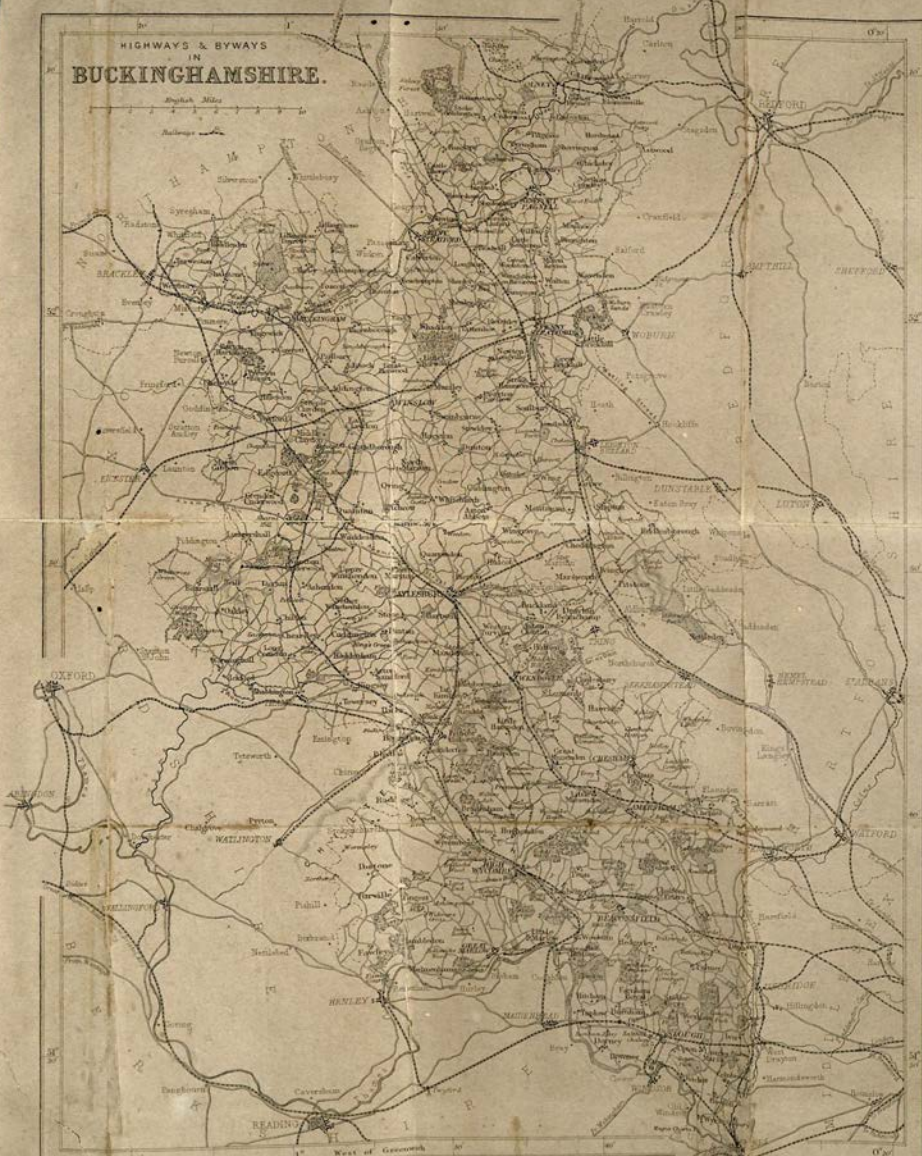
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